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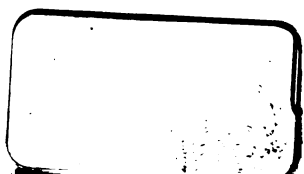
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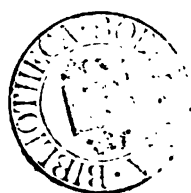


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LIFE
OF THE
REV. ALOYSIUS GENTILI L.L.D.





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L I F E

OF THE

REV. ALOYSIUS GENTILI, L.L.D.

FATHER OF CHARITY,

AND MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC IN ENGLAND.

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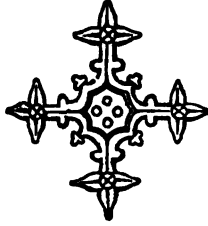
THE VERY REV. FATHER PAGANI.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that
bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace: of him that
showeth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion:
Thy God shall reign."—Isaiah lii., 7.

LONDON:
RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET;
9, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN; AND DERBY.
1851.

210. c. 252.





On his

Most esteemed and much beloved Father in Christ,
The

Right Rev. John Briggs, D.D.

Bishop of Exeter,

The following life is, with his kind permission,
most humbly inscribed,

In token

Of Respect and Gratitude,

By the Editor.

Ratcliffe College,
Passion Sunday, 1851.

LIFE
OF THE
REV. ALOYSIUS GENTILI, LL.D.

BOOK THE FIRST.

**CONTAINS A NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF THE REV.
ALOYSIUS GENTILI, FROM HIS BIRTH UNTIL HIS ADMIS-
SION INTO THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY.**

CHAPTER I.

**CONTENTS : THE PARENTAGE—COUNTRY—BIRTH—AND
STUDIES OF ALOYSIUS GENTILI: HE TAKES THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR IN LAWS—PRACTICES SUCCESSFULLY AT THE BAR
—AND SUBSEQUENTLY ABANDONS ALL FORENSIC PURSUITS.**

I. Towards the end of the last century, Joseph Gentili quitted his native place, called Citta Ducale, in the kingdom of Naples, in order to fix his residence at Rome. To this step, he was urged by a benevolent uncle, the Rev. Joseph Marconi, at that time Professor of Divinity in the Roman College, and Missionary Apostolic,—a Clergyman not less distinguished by his ecclesiastical learning than for the reputation of singular virtue, in which he died. The truth of this statement may be attested by not a few conspicuous

living personages, to whom he was intimately known. After the usual course of study, with his uncle's assistance, Joseph Gentili was enabled to adopt the legal profession, and to practise as an attorney. Having thus secured the means of earning a respectable livelihood, at the proper age, he took to wife Mary Ann Goraccarini, a comely and virtuous young woman of good Roman family. God was pleased to bless their union with a numerous progeny. Of their eight male and two female children, the firstborn was Aloysius, the hero of the following narrative.

II. To these honest and worthy parents, he owed his birth in the metropolis of the Christian world, on the 14th July, 1801, a day consecrated to the memory of the glorious Doctor and Cardinal, Saint Bonaventure. Wherefore, this was added to his other Christian names, viz. Aloysius, Bonaventure, Francis, and Camillus, which, the day after his birth, he received at the baptismal font in the then parochial, but now suppressed, church of St. Saviour. His first entrance into the world, was accompanied by two events, which seem not undeserving of record. The first was that on the same day, there took place in Rome a solemn function with the attendance of all the clergy, processionally conveying a very ancient and much revered likeness of our Blessed Redeemer to a chapel denominated "*ad sancta sanctorum*,"* in order to obtain the protection of the Almighty against those evils, with which Europe, and hapless Italy in particular, were threatened by the French armies under their first Consul, Napoleon, in the year 1801, and which appre-

* *Ad sancta Sanctorum* is the title of a sanctuary on the summit of the *Scala Sancta*: under its altar were deposited by Pope Leo the Third, some precious relics, in a shrine of cypress wood, with the inscription *ad sancta sanctorum*.

hensions were, at a later period, unfortunately realized. The second remarkable circumstance is, that this Roman infant in Rome, had for sponsor at his christening a pious and benevolent patrician of Roveredo, named Francesco Brunatti, who bequeathed at his death a considerable estate, to procure an educational maintenance in the Athens of the Catholic world, for some of his youthful countrymen, gifted with talents for one or other of the fine arts. At that time, who could have prognosticated that thirty years after, another illustrious patrician of Roveredo,* would form an alliance of intimate friendship with Aloysius Gentili—receive him into the same Religious Society—and be unto him as a father, leader, and master for the remainder of his life?

III. The boy, Aloysius, was sent to school at an early age by his parents, so that when he was little more than sixteen years old, after finishing the usual course of humanities and philosophy, under clerical and secular professors in the Roman College, he obtained matriculation among the students of jurisprudence at the Roman university, called the Sapienza. Let it not be supposed that the tender age of the new aspirant was any hindrance to his progress in learning, on the contrary, his scholastic testimonials† aver that, although the youngest in his class, Gentili carried off nearly all the first honours, and that in one year alone he obtained

* The Rev. Antonio Rosmini, Founder of the Institute of Charity.

† The following is a copy of one of these documents: "Aloysius Gentili optimæ spei, atque acris ingenii adolescens, quod miro in literas, honestatem, virtutem flagrat amore, alacremque humanioribus disciplinis dat operam idque palam hoc primo ingenii experimento fecerit, censorum judicio præmio donatus est decimo tertio Kal. Februarii 1815."

four prizes. During the first year of his legal studies, he was not only promoted among the graduates, approved of by the court (called the *Curia Innocenziana*), but also named a Solicitor. Finally, in the fourth year, he was declared with applause of the faculty, Doctor of both canon and civil laws. With the serious study of codes and decretals, Gentili assiduously combined other literary and artistic occupations not less useful than agreeable. For a long time, also, he diligently attended the Archæological lectures of Professor Nibby. It was the method of this eminent antiquary to conduct his pupils, once a week, to one or other of Rome's stately ruins, and there, amid material vestiges, and local associations, to descant eloquently upon the monumental grandeur of the past. From these interesting excursions, Gentili was never absent. It is related that, on one occasion, some of his fellow-students, either through indolence, or fear, excused themselves from following their master into the catacombs, where it is said Scipio's tomb was found, when Aloysius undauntedly seizing a torch, led the way, and at the same time attentively listened to every word, which fell from the lips of the erudite preceptor. He also ardently paid his court to the muses. In poetry, we opine, that he would have distinguished himself, had he cultivated it professionally. His favourite poet was, of course, Dante ; whose "Divine Comedy" he could almost recite by heart. Among his own poetical compositions may be specially mentioned an elegy dedicated to the Duke de Montmorencie, at that time ambassador from France to the Holy See ; this poem was occasioned by the death of a young English lady,*

* Miss Bathurst. This noble young lady, not yet out of her teens, was riding in the Ambassador's company along the banks of the Tyber, when her restive palfrey stumbled and plunged

who was drowned in the Tyber, near Torre di Quinzio, 1823. But, having before his departure for upper Italy, as we shall hereafter have occasion to relate, destroyed many of his manuscripts, especially in verse, we have no specimen left of his poetical vein to offer to our readers : but the fact of his having been elected a member of the Roman and Arcadian academies at the early age of nineteen years, may be given as a proof of the literary estimation in which he was held.

IV. From poetry, he knew also how to turn his attention to mechanical science, and the art of design, which he occasionally exercised, according to times and circumstances. When he was yet a child, he delighted in the construction of dolls, and puppet shows, for the purpose of affording some innocent household amusement to his parents, friends, and younger brothers. By himself, he could manage to make the stage and scenes, and have the figures well dressed. Everything that he had seen at a public theatre was admirably imitated in miniature. When older and already a student of philosophy, he limited this theatrical pastime to the autumnal vacations. Instead, he used to occupy himself with inventing and fabricating various physical instruments, among which, his family still remember some well formed kaleidoscopes and electrical machines. He displayed similar industry and skill in ornamenting a little altar, that soon took the place of his theatre, which, with all its appurtenances, he disposed of to provide his new oratory with more appropriate decorations. From his mother and aunts he solicited and obtained fine linen, and costly stuffs to make surplices, albs, and other ecclesiastical vestments.

into the river. The horse was rescued ; but his fair charge perished in a watery grave. If report speak true the body was never found.

In the diminutive sanctuary, he kept an ever burning lamp; and on festal days, he would assemble his little brothers and other boys of their age, in order to form a domestic, yet solemn procession, with cross and banners, &c. The greatest display was, however, reserved for the festival of his own patron saint, Aloysius. The little altar was then adorned as richly as possible, and the antependium as well as the steps, were tastefully decorated with flowers. He was also one of the number annually chosen to perform this pious office, at the magnificent altar. of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, in the Church of St. Ignatius, adjoining the Roman College.

V. Having become a lawyer at the age of twenty-one, in order to improve himself in practice as a special pleader at the bar, Gentili obtained a place in the office of the Advocate Galimberti, auditor to one among the judges of that famous tribunal called the "Rota." The young lawyers placed under the direction of these auditors, are commonly called *Segreti di Ruota*; in this capacity, Gentili remained two years; after which, he was soon called to exercise his profession as a special advocate. He was not long in acquiring a reputation, which was increased by his successful and triumphant pleading in the two first suits, which he defended in public court. Whereupon several briefs were offered to him, especially by persons connected with the bar. To an ardent and aspiring young man this success was a dangerous temptation, calculated to flatter his pride and to fill his heart with the vain hope and prospect of a brilliant fortune upon earth. But the supreme Ruler had otherwise decreed. We shall soon see how, by an all-wise providence, Gentili was awakened from his dream, and became conscious of the magical delusion, with which, the world was about to deceive him.

VI. To study still more profoundly that particular branch of jurisprudence to which he had devoted himself, he made a collection of all the decisions *Coram Consalvi*, the name of the judge before whom they were argued, when Auditor of the Rota. In this elaborate work, Gentili had arranged every question in chronological order; giving, besides an index, a summary of the arguments on both sides. This performance, the result of much labour and research, he intended to publish, if his mind had not been suddenly turned therefrom by an unforeseen metamorphosis. While prosecuting his legal researches, he was induced to court the notice of the beforementioned Auditor, the illustrious Cardinal Consalvi. This eminent personage, who subsequently became Pope Pius the Seventh's secretary of state, was not dilatory in according his favour and patronage to the talented young advocate. The dignity of judge, to which the latter aspired as a step to higher honours, was promised; but the death of the Cardinal in the mean time, quashed the lofty designs of both patron and client.

VII. This adverse, or rather providential stroke of fortune, made such an impression on the disappointed Gentili, that he immediately abandoned every thing connected with forensic studies; indeed, so strong became his aversion, that he could not bear to hear the Law mentioned as a subject of conversation. If at dinner, or supper, any question of the kind was mooted by his father, or brothers, who were also engaged in legal business, Aloysius would silently quit the table, and retire alone to his own chamber.

CHAPTER II.

ALOYSIUS GENTILI TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES—OF MUSIC AND OF SONG. HE IS KNIGHTED—BECOMES A TEACHER OF THE ITALIAN—APPLIES HIMSELF TO AGRICULTURE.

VIII. The desire so powerful in the human heart, of rising superior to adversity, and of making a brilliant appearance in public, though crushed for a time in this high-spirited young man, soon recovered its wonted strength in a different direction. The ex-advocate determined upon applying himself strenuously to the acquisition of the principal modern languages, hoping thereby to enter upon a new career of glory and profit. For this purpose, he secluded himself from all his friends and acquaintances. The domestics were required to give to every visitor who made any enquiry about him the following answer: that Signor Gentili junior was too busily engaged to be disturbed by anybody. Even his nearest relations saw but little of him, except at meal times. Studying indefatigably for almost twelve months the English, French, and Spanish, without the aid of any master, he kept to his chamber and his books. His parents and brothers, by whom he was tenderly beloved, were grieved beyond measure, as they feared this strange and laborious application could only be the cause or effect of some mental derangement. At the end of the year, however, thinking himself sufficiently versed in the beforementioned languages, especially the English, he began to reappear in public, to visit company, especially of foreigners—preferring

the society of the latter, who abound in Rome, for the purpose of exercising himself in the pronunciation of those languages which he had learned in solitude. His diurnal and nocturnal application as a linguist had been so assiduous, that foreigners were astonished at his proficiency in their respective idioms, and were it not for his inaccurate accent, they could hardly have credited him to be an untraveller Italian.

IX. In order to increase his accomplishments, besides his polyglotic studies, he began to cultivate a taste for music. He could already play tolerably well upon the guitar, when he took a fancy to a piano forte. This instrument, without consultation, he soon purchased: it was no sooner conveyed to his apartment than he commenced a musical overture, while the discordant sounds elicited by the untutored musician, excited the jeers and laughter of all the inmates of the house. However, naturally adventurous and persevering, he was not to be deterred by any difficulty, and henceforth, he seemed to breathe for nothing but music, which, both vocally and instrumentally, he resolved to cultivate under the direction of the best masters. At that time, the celebrated Rossini was composing in Rome some of his musical pieces, and Gentili everywhere was enthusiastic in their praise. He also assisted the Marquis Muti Papazzurri, in establishing the philharmonic Academy. In this society of amateurs, he became at first a chorister, but the president having observed that he was in possession of a good bass voice, induced him to become one of the leading solo singers : at his first appearance in this capacity he was received by his auditors with most flattering applause. At this assembly, which took place in the Sinibaldi palace, the Austrian Ambassador, Count Appony, and the French Ambassador, Viscount Chateaubriand,

were present, besides several other diplomatists and noble personages, both foreign and native, who afterwards personally congratulated with the novel dilettante. Shortly after, he was invited to sing at their concerts by the beforementioned Ambassadors. Similar compliments were also paid him at other evening parties, especially by the English.

X. As I am not writing a panegyrical but an historical narrative of Gentili's life, I must not omit here to mention one of those human weaknesses, which usually prevail among men who are ambitious and high-minded in the world's estimation. Owing to his frequent intercourse with persons of noble birth and rank from all countries, he felt humbled and mortified at appearing among them without a title. Wherefore, to remedy this defect, he procured an introduction to Duke Sforza Cesarini, who had the privilege of creating Counts palatine, and Knights of the order of the Golden Spur.* Some time after, the Duke spontaneously offered to the new candidate, the wished-for honour of knighthood, as a pledge of friendship, and as a reward for distinguished merit. Both these tokens were doubtless insignificant and paltry, if we look at them in a philosophical point of view. But are not all other distinctions conferred by the world quite as ridiculous and trivial? Be this as it may, the young Cavalier was proud of his new dignity, and deeming himself inferior to few others in rank, he now began to assume a loftier bearing in the circles of fashion, and in the coteries of high life.

* In the year 1539, Pope Paul the Third conceded these privileges to Alexander and Paul Sforza, Dukes of Milan, and their descendants. The Papal Bull has among others the following clause: *Nec non quoscumque Milites aureatos et Comites Palatinos consimili facultate legitimandi.*

XI. About this time, he was requested by some foreigners of his acquaintance, to give them lessons in the Italian language. Aware how advantageous this occupation would be to improve his own knowledge, as well as to extend his connections, he, at length, consented to do so, at first gratuitously, to his friends. But the rapid progress which they made, induced him to become a professional teacher; and the friends whom he had already obliged, soon brought him a large number of distinguished pupils, especially from among the English residents of the city. His abilities as an Italian master, he exercised for nearly two years in Rome. The summer seasons, however, were passed at Naples, where the air is usually less sultry and more agreeable than at Rome.

At the end of two years, he found that the profits of his lectures amounted to two thousand dollars. With this sum he purchased a fine vineyard and some other land, situated on Monte Mario, near the Vatican. Having thus become a landlord, he turned his attention to farming. In order to unite theory with practice, he began to enrich his library with works on agriculture, and to study its science with his wonted ardour and application. Grieved at seeing this healthy, honest, and useful employment, once so highly appreciated by the ancient Romans, now so much neglected and despised by the moderns, he resolved to make an effort to restore credit to the art of husbandry by his own example. Wherefore, soon after his land purchase, he bought a pair of oxen, and in imitation of Cincinnatus and Cato, he followed the plough, instructing the rustics present in the true classical method of tilling the ground, and at the same time eulogising the excellencies, advantages, and happiness of their mode of life. But, as might have been easily foreseen, in a

person delicately bred, his bodily strength was not equal to the vigour of his mind ; and on being overtaken by fever, his medical advisers obliged him to give up his ploughing exercise for the less laborious task of scribbling with his pen.

XII. From what has hitherto been narrated it must not be inferred, with all his youthful impetuosity, that Gentili was either irreligious or dissolute; on the contrary, all the testimonials concerning his behaviour, from childhood to manhood, bear witness to his constant christian piety and irreproachable manners. He not only abhorred and shunned every mean and shameful vice, but also faithfully performed all those religious duties becoming his station in life. We have already observed, how as a child his inclinations tended towards sacred and ecclesiastical things. As a student in the Roman college, he was one of the youths chosen to form the pious sodality of St. Aloysius-del-Giardino, so called on account of its members assembling for recreation on holidays, in a garden belonging to the college. Here it may not be unworthy of remark, that it being the custom for some pious clergyman to take under his charge ten of the boys as soon as they arrived, Gentili's decade was superintended by the Abate Mastai Ferretti—the now happily reigning Supreme Pontiff, Pius the Ninth. When he left the college for the university, he became a member there of another association, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. Of this pious congregation the then prefect was Monsignor Ostini, who was subsequently made a Cardinal of holy Church. But, certainly not the less important testimonial is that of his confessor, the Rev. John Marini, who attests, that Gentili usually approached the sacraments once a fortnight. Another no light proof of attachment to his creed, is the following circumstance : In his intercourse with

foreigners as a professor of languages, he often had to converse with Protestants, especially Anglicans; on these occasions, considering that he was not a theologian, he prudently abstained from commencing a controversial debate; still, when he was provoked by Protestants themselves, he did not decline the discussion, but displayed great learning, fervour, and zeal in defending his religion. More than once he had to contend with ministers and bishops of the Anglican Church, who, after a long and warm dispute, when pressed hard by their opponent's cogent erudition and logical acumen, would finish by saying, that "they were satisfied with their own religion." "And with mine, I am also perfectly contented," would be the final reply of the Catholic champion. It is remembered, however, by his brothers, that after these religious disputes, he sometimes returned home in a state of violent agitation. By these preludes it would seem, that Providence prepared him for those more obstinate and numerous combats he was afterwards to sustain with Anglican errors in their native home.

XIII. It was a deeply rooted religious sentiment that enabled Gentili to overcome that insensate but common prejudice or silly dread of what the world will say. Although he was very punctilious on the score of honour, he had the moral courage to decline a duel to which he was challenged by some offended friend. With the cause of the quarrel I am not acquainted, but this much is known, that yielding to the fear of God, who condemns such an impious mode of settling a dispute, rather than to the fear of man, Gentili indignantly refused to fight, and preferred to meet the world's look of contempt and scorn with equal scorn and contempt.

Thus, although, from the before-mentioned circum-

stances it may be sufficiently inferred that Gentili, upon the whole, was a good, pious, and moral young man; yet was he still far from that degree of christian sanctity and perfection to which a merciful God had designed to raise him.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE FAILURE OF A MATRIMONIAL PROJECT, GENTILI ABANDONS A SECULAR FOR AN ECCLESIASTICAL STATE OF LIFE—HIS WEAK HEALTH PREVENTS HIS ADMISSION AMONGST THE JESUITS.

XIV. Gentili had now reached the twenty-seventh year of his age. He was tall and well made in person, without being corpulent, of noble appearance and dignified bearing. His hair was shiningly black, and his complexion fair, though somewhat pale, with blue piercing eyes—his voice also was sonorous and agreeable. Besides the advantage of a prepossessing exterior, he was gifted with a retentive memory, a clear understanding, a lively imagination, and a natural eloquence. In addition to his accomplishments in jurisprudence literature, and other liberal arts and sciences, he was doctor, advocate, professor, and knight. At the same time he was in good pecuniary circumstances, and in communication with a large circle of aristocratic friends and acquaintance. Indeed, he had apparently triumphed over his first reverse of fortune, and the brightest hopes now seemed to shine upon his path. One thing only might appear to be wanting to complete his felicity upon this earth, and that was, to find a con-

sort of congenial disposition, with whom he could share, or rather, increase his happiness. In this design, he was no doubt encouraged by his parents, considering that he was the eldest son and the main-stay of the family. In fact, in his memoirs I find, that he had fallen in love with a young English lady of noble birth and large fortune. Flattering himself that the affection was mutual, and that her parents entertained a high esteem of his own qualifications, he frankly made known to them his wishes, and asked their consent to the marriage. But, contrary to his expectations, they answered, that he was welcome to visit their house as a friend, but without making any pretensions to the hand of their daughter. In fine, to sever all hopes on both sides, the young lady was immediately sent to England. This last disagreeable information was not made known to her lover until his next visit, which he came to make, not without hope of producing some change in his favour.

XV. It would be difficult, peradventure, to describe the tumult of affections which agitated the heart of the disconsolate Gentili on hearing this unanticipated piece of news, but we may form some notion thereof from the consequences which ensued. In the first place, he became utterly disenchanted with all earthly pursuits, and felt in himself a perfect conversion to the love of divine and celestial things. The worldling and the sceptic who have no faith in an all-wise disposer of events, and are ignorant of that divine omnipotent power which, descending from on high, penetrates and transforms, as it were, the old into a new man, usually attribute to an ignoble motive any sudden change in a christian from vice to virtue—from disorder to regularity—or they ascribe its cause to the vexation of disappointment, or to a melancholy dejection of mind. But

they do not observe how comparatively few there are among the discontented and unfortunate who take occasion from adversity to ameliorate their moral conduct according to the rules of evangelical perfection. Christian philosophy, on the other hand, indicates that reverses of fortune become causes or occasions of moral improvement in man, only when directed to this end by the previous influence of Divine Grace, which illumines and aids the sorrow-stricken sufferer to profit by the bitter yet wholesome experience. In this case, the contempt of worldly goods does not proceed from despair of ever enjoying them again, or from any scornful spite against the inconstancy of fortune, but from an interior conviction, that there is a higher and nobler happiness to be found, viz.: the Supreme Infinite Good, which is God. Then, far from leading a life of dulness and gloom, the penitent finds and enjoys true felicity. It seems incredible and incomprehensible to those, who have not passed through the ordeal, how the tears of repentance can be sweeter than the faults that made them flow, and superior even to every carnal delight. They do not understand how the pleasures so highly prized by themselves can be sincerely despised by the votaries of the Cross, who do so, nevertheless, just as aged philosophers condemn the toys and pastimes of childhood.

XVI. But, from this digression let us return to our narrative. Gentili's conversion was not a mere transient feeling of disgust with the world, which irreligious men express when frustrated in their ambitious schemes. For no sooner had the parental guardians of his beloved announced that she had departed from the shores of Italy, than a veil seemed, as it were, to fall from his eyes, and thus he was enabled to see things in a new light. He became deeply convinced of the

vanity of temporal, as well as the importance of eternal interests; and now he resolved to renounce the world from this time forward, in real earnest. As the inspiration was divine, so the resolution was efficacious and persevering. On his return home, his pictorial and musical exercises were forthwith suspended; he dissolved his professional engagements, withdrew from all connections with public society, took leave of his dearest friends, deprived himself of all vain superfluities, and keeping aloof as much as possible from external concerns, he shut himself up in an interior solitude, where he seemed to breathe nothing but love divine, and, doubtless, often repeating the well-known ejaculation: "*Deus meus et omnia.*"—My God and my all. The perfections of the Deity—devotion to God's blessed mother—the zeal of the apostles in preaching the gospel—the fortitude of the martyrs in shedding their blood for the faith—the penitential retirement of holy hermits, and the saintly joys of a perfectly christian life—formed the topics of his conversation, as well as the subjects of his thoughts and desires. He now concentrated his studies almost exclusively on the bible and other books of piety. The interior fervour, which burned within, was not long in outwardly manifesting itself. Instead of visits to profane societies, academical meetings, and theatrical shows, he devoted his leisure hours to religious conferences with the most exemplary ecclesiastics, to attendance upon the sick in the public hospitals, and to other works of mercy. For the better direction of his devotional ardour, in the year 1828, he became a member of the celebrated oratory founded by Father Caravita, whose rules of christian virtue he faithfully followed. He would join the brethren in their practice of publicly singing the Rosary and the Litany through the streets of Rome, when they proces-

sionally left the oratory in the evening to return to their own homes. Moreover, to subdue false shame and human respect, when passing before a church in the day-time, in the presence of persons passing by, he would throw himself on his knees at the door of God's house, and offer up a short prayer.

XVII. This extraordinary change in Gentili's deportment attracted the attention of not a few out of the many to whom he was known, and various were the opinions to which it gave rise. His parents and friends thought at first, that it might be only the transitory effect of blighted hope or sudden contradiction. They, therefore, resorted to every means of diverting him from his present ideas, and tried to bring him back to his former sociable and merry mode of living. Others turned him into ridicule, as a man who had lost his wits; to this notion, indeed, certain extravagancies and devotional singularities, resulting from the first fervid impulses of his altered convictions, gave some pretext. To the first, however, he gave answer, that he did not yield to any sadness or affliction; that, on the contrary, he never before enjoyed such sweet contentment and peace of mind. He, moreover, entreated them to abandon the broad road of a sinful, mundane, fashion of life, and to walk in the narrow path of virtue,—to devote themselves wholly to the service of God and the salvation of their souls. In such a method alone could they find true wisdom and supreme felicity; all else was nought but illusion, vanity, and affliction of spirit. Of those who derided his conduct, he took no further notice than to pity theirs, being well aware, in accordance with St. Paul's advice, how necessary it is to become a fool in the eyes of the world, in order to become wise unto salvation. "*Stultus fiat ut sit sapiens.*" (1 Cor. iii.)

XVIII. Withal, the violent and sudden change from gay living, and even luxurious cheer to a retired penitential regimen, acted powerfully upon his corporeal frame, so that he was seized by an obstinate tertian ague, which he could not get rid of for fourteen months. Seeing that the disorder was not curable by their medicines, his physicians recommended the trial of an atmosphere more salubrious than that of Rome. Consequently, accompanied by a favourite brother, (to whom the present biographer is indebted for many anecdotes recorded in this narrative,) Gentili went to reside in the small town of S. Gregorio, not far from Tivoli. After a few days, he removed to a more salubrious lodging, in the Carmelite monastery of St. Maria Nuova, situate on an eminence near the town. But before his removal, a circumstance happened which I deem not unworthy to be recorded in this place. The town of S. Gregorio, with its adjacent territory, belonged to a nobleman named Pio. His agent, or steward, was Gentili's father, so that the two brothers on their arrival had no difficulty in finding accommodation at the baronial mansion. The care of souls in the parish was divided between an Arch-priest and a Father Curate. Owing to some quarrel, unknown to the writer, there existed between the two ecclesiastics a notorious and scandalous enmity. In addition to this impropriety, the parochial Church was in a state of shameful disorder and neglect. Being a witness of these two serious inconveniences, the zeal of the fervent Gentili induced him to personally blame the Curate for his sinful and unbecoming example, in neglecting the honour of God's house, and harbouring rancour towards the Arch-priest. The Curate, somewhat surprised at this reproof, sought to excuse himself by saying, that the Church was not provided with sufficient funds to

keep it in better repair; and with regard to the second misdemeanour, he asserted, that the Arch-priest was the culprit, and that, therefore, it was his duty to be the first to crave pardon, and then all would be over. Against this plea Gentili urged in a dignified manner, his own example, saying: "It occurred to me also to be offended, insulted, and even challenged to a duel; nevertheless, I, shortly after, was the first to seek for and obtained reconciliation, by embracing my adversary." This reprimand, administered to the Curate by the steward's son, was rumoured abroad, to the great edification of the people, while in the principal delinquent, it is said, it produced no good effect.

XIX. In his new rural abode, Gentili remained about forty days; during which time his fever was entirely subdued, and his health restored. Towards the end of November, he returned to Rome, to begin a new career. But, "while man proposes, God disposes." This proverb was signally verified in Gentili's life. We have seen how he commenced as a lawyer, and weary of this profession, he aspired to an office under Government. After being thwarted in this design, he applied himself successively to the study of languages, of painting, of music, and of song; finally, he aimed at a rich wedding; but he was predestined by Divine Providence to a sublimer state. It was apparently permitted him to pass through these different conditions of life, the better to convince him of the vanities and perils of earthly goods, and the more safely to guide and fix him in an ecclesiastical and religious vocation.

XX. From the moment that he renounced the world, he determined, that whatever sacrifice he made to God should be made with heroical generosity. In order, therefore, to be able more efficaciously to promote the glory of God, and the extension of the Church of Jesus

Christ upon earth, he felt a strong desire to become an ecclesiastic not only, but a member also of some religious institute approved by the Apostolic See, and famed for its strict observance of rule, as well as for its active charity, and zeal in furthering God's honour and the salvation of men. Wherefore, he lost no time in consulting some Jesuit Fathers, who had then been re-appointed to the direction of the Roman college. As he frequented their school of divinity, he resolved to ask for admission into the society of St. Ignatius. This occurred when he was labouring under the intermittent fever before-mentioned. He frankly represented his wish to the General of the society, but that discreet superior, on beholding his pale and emaciated countenance, advised him to attend first of all to the recovery of his bodily health, and thus avoid the risk of dismissal from the novitiate should his distemper increase, as well as the vain conjectures which might be formed in public respecting its cause.

CHAPTER IV.

GENTILI FORMS A FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ABATE ANTONIO ROSMINI, AND BECOMES HIS COMPANION IN THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY.

XXI. On receiving this answer, Gentili returned to the bosom of his family, whence he removed for change of air, as was stated in the preceding chapter, to San Gregorio, the better to re-establish his health, which was now an indispensable condition for the accomplishment of his pious design. But God dis-

posed somewhat differently, for we shall soon see how it happened that Gentili became a religious and a priest, not among the Jesuits, but in the Institute of Charity. This new religious association had been scarcely in existence two years, when its founder, the Abate Antonio Rosmini, having commenced the formation of a community at a place called Mount Calvary, near Domodossola, resolved to proceed to Rome, to get the rule of his Order examined and approved of by the Church. He arrived in the holy city towards the end of November, 1828, and remained there until May of the year 1830, that is, nearly eighteen months, during which time, besides attending to the negotiation about his Institute, he dictated and printed, "*Il nuovo Saggio sull'origine delle Idee*," (A new essay on the Origin of Ideas.) Among other works ready for press, he was advised to give the preference to this, by Cardinal Capellari, who introduced him to the reigning Pontiff, Pius the Eighth. His Holiness also was pleased to encourage Rosmini to persevere in his philosophical studies with these memorable words: "We live in times wherein it is necessary to guide men with the aid of reason."* Owing to his great reputation for

* It is worth while recording here a curious anecdote, which happened during Rosmini's interview with the Pope. While expatiating upon the proposition above enunciated, in order to corroborate it by an example, His Holiness took from the table a book, and pointing out, both to the Cardinal and to Rosmini an anonymous work, he highly commended the logic wherewith it was written, adding, without being aware that Rosmini was the author, "that such was the way to reason with men now-a-days." He then asked Rosmini's opinion of the work in question, viz.: "*L'esame delle opinioni di Melchiorre Gioja in favor della moda*." Which may be found in the *Memorie di Religione e di Letteratura di Modena*. From his ambiguous mode of answering, the Holy Father guessed the anonymo's secret, and then congratulated with the newly discovered author.

learning and piety, Rosmini was continually visited by distinguished personages, both lay and ecclesiastical, among whom we may enumerate our Gentili. As was before observed, the latter continued to attend lectures on theology, in the Roman college. As he still wore a secular dress, it was not without a difficult victory over self, or without astonishment of beholders, for a young lawyer, of well-known abilities, to go to school again every day, at the age of thirty, and to learn and repeat his lesson amid a crowd of students much younger than himself.

XXII. However, having heard of the projected Institute of charity, and of its learned founder, he wished to become personally acquainted with Rosmini, and, therefore, obtained an introduction to him through the medium of a mutual friend. Finding him, at that time, about the first days of the year 1830, in an infirm state of health, his first interview was necessarily brief, but in other successive and protracted visits, a friendship was formed between the two, and many inquiries were made and satisfactorily answered concerning the new Institute. It was on one of these occasions, after musing a little time, that Gentili exclaimed, "who knows whether it be not God's will that I should become a member of your Institute?" In reply to this or similar enquiries subsequently repeated, Rosmini would simply remark, that the perfect life recommended by the evangelical counsels was excellent in itself, and highly to be prized; that those were happy who, inspired by the Lord, corresponded with His grace, and, in fine, that if he had resolved to devote himself to this kind of life, his first step towards living solely for God, should be to leave his home, in imitation of the father of the people elect, Abraham, to whom it was said: *Egrederere de domo tua*. Hereupon, Gentili took occasion to say,

that as regarded following the gospel counsels his mind was already made up; but to do so by quitting his home he did not see its feasibility, as he now depended on his family for support; and that, were he entirely to abandon them, he foresaw that bitterness and persecution would be the result. These objections Rosmini met by merely recommending prayer to the Most High, and humble trust in His providence.

XXIII. In this dilemma, Gentili called one evening upon Rosmini, and immediately threw himself at his feet, acknowledging that he felt great pain in making this act of humiliation, but as it seemed to be a divine inspiration, he obeyed in order to overcome himself. He then begged to be assisted with alms that he might be enabled to prosecute his theological studies without opposition from his family, or any other profane impediment. To this request, Rosmini answered as follows: "I perceive how good and holy are your intentions; at the same time Heaven knows how strong my own desire is to co-operate therewith. But as my engagements with the small nascent society at Domodossola are, it is well known, of such a nature, that all my property is now irrevocably devoted to its maintenance, therefore I may not divert it to any other use; but if the inclination you formerly manifested becomes a resolution to join the society, it would then be in my power to afford the required assistance." This proposal Gentili begged leave to refer for decision to his spiritual director, and after a few days, he returned full of joy to make known his determination to adhere to the rising Institute.

Although Gentili was quite prepared to accompany Rosmini on his return to Domodossola, nevertheless his superior deemed it expedient for him to remain in Rome until he had completed his course of divinity,

and received sacerdotal ordination. It was, however, arranged that he should leave his paternal home, and be provided with board and lodging in the Irish College. For this purpose, permission was obtained by Rosmini from the eminent protector of that establishment, Cardinal Capellari, (subsequently Pope Gregory XVI.) Then it was that Gentili assumed the clerical dress, and after due probation, and going through the spiritual exercises, on the 25th March, he received the tonsure and four minor orders; and on the 10th April following, he was ordained subdeacon. Shortly after, he was separated from his dear friend and brother in Christ, the Abate Rosmini, but not without hopes of soon following him to Domodossola. Before departure, he took charge of an epistle from Gentili to the Vice-Rector of Calvary House, of which the tenor was nearly as follows.

"Rome, 30th April, 1830.

"MOST DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,

"I avail myself of our very dear father—the Reverend Antonio Rosmini's return to the hermitage, to send you these few lines, in the first place, to beg of you to recommend me fervently to the Lord during the holy sacrifice, and also to God's holy Mother, in order that she may obtain from her divine Son the pardon of my sins, as well as all that affection wherewith the Deity wills to be loved by such a creature as myself. In the second place, I write to inform you briefly, how, without any merit of mine, Divine Providence unexpectedly called me to your society. After twenty-seven years of an iniquitous life, when I was about to fill up its measure, God, in His unbounded mercy, compassionately moved my heart, and when I deserved to be given over to a reprobate course, he caused my cheeks

to flow with bitter tears, which, I trust, in the benignity of infinite love divine, will never be wiped away, but rather be left me for food day and night, until I expire with grief at the foot of the crucifix.

“When the veil of worldly darkness was withdrawn, I became aware by whom I had been snatched from the jaws of hell, like a brand from the burning. Behold my great consolation which I owe to most holy Mary, in whose honour, from childhood, I was accustomed to recite, though negligently, the five psalms, the initials of which compose her blessed name. At first, I wished entirely to abandon the world, and to become a Jesuit, but every time I attempted to do so, a relapse into sickness hindered my admission, so that, after violent periodical attacks of fever during twelve months, I began to see clearly that it was not God’s will I should become a Jesuit; and although I craved light from the Lord, I felt no inclination for any other order. I then endeavoured to persuade myself, that I was destined to be a secular priest for some other end. Though still a layman, I began the study of Theology, preparatory to Holy Orders, with the view of going to England in the company of other missionaries, there to convert souls to God—to promote the welfare, and ameliorate the manners of the Catholics;—and especially to reform the clergy. This plan I knew not how, or when, in the distance, it might be accomplished. I had no design of founding a new Institute, but only of introducing a branch of one already existing in Italy.

“In the meantime I had not sufficient funds for my maintenance—wherefore, after attending the public lectures at the College, I continued to give lessons, as before, to private pupils. I fell, however, into great perplexity of conscience, and trouble of mind, while my affairs became so involved in confusion, as to place me

in the dilemma of abandoning God's service, or of totally giving up the cares of the world. Even if my life had depended thereupon, I would not have adopted the first alternative; yet I did not see how I might extricate myself from the other difficulty. This mental embarrassment was to me more burthensome than the previous bodily ailment. I continued to pray to God, and to His blessed Mother, for a manifestation of the Divine will, to which I entirely resigned myself. Not long before this I had made the Abate Rosmini's acquaintance, towards whom, from the first moment, I felt a superhuman attraction; and after repeated prayers, I became convinced that the Lord had appointed him to be my deliverer; on which account I threw myself at his feet, and placed myself at his disposal. By his charity, I have been assisted; and every day I experience more and more how it was God's will that he should aid me on the path of spirituality, and that he should act as my guiding star unto the Lord. It happened to me also, what is said to have occurred to you, that is, to find in the constitution of our society the very plan I had been meditating, though in an indistinct and confused form. At length, here I am, though at a distance, one of your confrères; and may God grant me soon to be present with you, and to retire, in spirit and in truth, from this sinful world, in which I have committed so much evil.

"Since the Lord has vouchsafed to call me among you, I am at a loss for words to express my gratification at finding you all so devout to Mary, ever blessed, to whom is owing whatever the Lord has been pleased to operate in me, His most vile and ungrateful creature. This circumstance is to me an additional link of union, considering that she perhaps obtained from God the grace of my admission into a society which seems to

rise under her special protection. Blessed be the Almighty who has chosen her for our patroness. Let us frequently inculcate to the faithful to cherish a devotion towards Her. O if all christians venerated Her as a Mother most amiable, bequeathed to us by Christ's love on the cross, we should soon see a change in the world. But, alas! their thoughtless indifference is an obstacle. But now the beautiful month of May approaches—a month which here, in Rome, is especially consecrated to Mary. O at that time indeed many are the flowers and fruits of virtue presented for her acceptance. When I go to Domodossola, if the devotion of the 'Mese Mariano' be not already established there, I hope, I may be permitted to introduce it, according to the Roman custom; and then will be seen what prodigies of grace are effected through the intercession of our beloved Mother, in behalf of those who take a part in promoting her honour.

"Salute our dear brother Molinari, and tell him also to recommend me to the Lord. On last Holy Saturday I was ordained Subdeacon: at Pentecost I expect to be made Deacon; and in September next to be ordained Priest. Here allow me to add, on this subject, that I received the first Tonsure on the festival of the Annunciation; and as our dear Mother Mary on that day passed to a state of Divine maternity, so did I exchange my lay condition, however unworthily, for the clerical state.

"Salute, in fine, our lay-brother, Isaja, and tell him not to forget me in his prayers, as in mine I shall not be unmindful of him. In conclusion, embracing all in the Lord, I subscribe myself

"Your affectionate brother in Jesus Christ,

"ALOYSIUS GENTILI."

CHAPTER V.

THE DEPARTURE OF ROSMINI—GENTILI REMAINS IN ROME.
—THEIR RECIPROCAL EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

XXV. The Abate Rosmini left his new companion in Rome for two reasons. The first was, that he might more conveniently prosecute his theological studies; the second motive was, to prepare by degrees his parents and brothers, by whom he was tenderly beloved, for the painful separation. This, he thought, might be prudently allowed to a friend of mature age, firm in his vocation, and of a delicate and enlightened conscience. It was agreed upon, however, that his call to the Institute of Charity should be kept secret from his parents and friends, thus to avoid inopportune objections, as well as to act in accordance with those maxims of christian wisdom and humility, which enjoin silence where there is no necessity of speaking of one's own affairs. When all his preparations for the priesthood were over, he might find a reason for separating himself from his family, and then take his departure for Upper Italy.

XXVI. Withal, well knowing the weakness of human nature, and the snares wherewith the world and the devil might circumvent his absent friend, to divert him from his generous resolution, Rosmini did not wholly abandon him to himself; but from the extremity of the Italian peninsula, he took care to comfort him with long and frequent letters, and to confirm him in his vocation by counteracting the first assaults of his spiritual adversary. A summary, or entire quotations

from this epistolary correspondence, may not be unacceptable to the readers of this biography, as they contain precious maxims of Christian philosophy, and practicable examples of perfect virtue. On his arrival at Domodossola, Rosmini wrote tidings thereof to Gentili. After describing the spiritual sweetness he had experienced on revisiting this asylum, and on witnessing the order, concord, humility, fervour, and love of his brethren and companions, together with their laborious zeal for the welfare of their neighbours, the writer proceeds to say: "O if you also were here! Assuredly, with God's assistance, in humility and retirement, you might do much good. To me this lowliness is highly valuable; and this retirement I cherish as most dear and delightful. One thing only do I fear, that it will be but of short duration.....On leaving Rome, I confided to our friend, the Abate Barola, a small present for you, with the persuasion that you would receive it in the same spirit wherein it was offered. This was an advice on the manner how to propose instructive topics in conversation with respectable persons on obvious matters; that is, in a way so as not to seem to inculcate any novelty; but only to recall to notice, for common edification, things already known to the company. By this means, humility is better observed—and a deference is shewn to the knowledge of others, even so far as to admit that they are better informed than ourselves.

"I have felt a scruple in withholding this advice from you; and at the same time I have experienced some difficulty in communicating it even when on the point of doing so. Although this reluctance on my part was a fault, because, among brethren and friends as we are in the Lord, there should be more freedom and confidence, nevertheless, I do not conceal that the renitency

partly arose from the apprehension of getting this answer to my counsel: 'Medice cura te ipsum;' 'Physician, heal thyself.' The reply, I am aware, would not be inapplicable. But be this as it may, you will know how to profit by my advice, avoiding more carefully in conversation whatever indicates our esteeming those with whom we talk to be very superficially informed on religious matters; or at least, to offer our own opinions with humility, in a greater or minor degree."

XXVII. In answer to this counsel, among other matters, on the 25th of May, the same year, 1830, Gentili wrote the following: "With regard to myself, I am much indebted to you for the wholesome advice entrusted to the Abate Barola, in order to correct my silly talkativeness. But why not tell me plainly of it yourself? Has not the Lord united us for mutual assistance? After being so generous in temporal charity, why be so reserved towards me in that which is spiritual? If, according to the principle of our Institute, you wait for your neighbour's request, I now candidly make it in the name of our dear Mother, Mary, ever blessed, and desire you to make known all the faults, negligences, and defects you must have perceived in me, begging also for particular rules calculated to produce amendment, since my sole wish is to destroy the old man of sin within me, and become more and more pleasing to God. Continue to send me these not little, but great presents, as often as possible. In fine, Domodossola occurs to my mind every day more frequently. Should this go on so, it will soon be a settled affair. O desirable settlement! O when shall we be united! Heaven grant that it may be soon. Giuliani salutes you, so does Tarasconi, who having heard of the mishap to your travelling carriage, says, he was reminded of

the shaking the devil gave to the chamber of St. Ignatius when he determined upon giving himself up to God.*

In this same letter, Gentili mentioned an excellent Irish ecclesiastic, his intimate friend, who manifested an inclination to follow his example in becoming a member of the Institute of Charity; on which account he wished to know well the nature and rules of the new society. Rosmini here took occasion to give fresh instructions to his dear friend, wisely checking his proselytising spirit. In a letter dated the 4th of June, he writes thus: "The case of your Irish companion appears to me an act of that infinitely good Providence, in which our institute enjoins us to confide. To your young friend pray give my kind regards. As regards communicating to him our constitutions, if you think him intelligent enough to appreciate them, let him have a copy, recommending him a prudent silence. Warn him, however, not to read them hastily or superficially, but slowly and orderly pondering the whole, especially its spirit, which consists in its ascetic principles. That is the essential part. As to its material development, hereafter, and which is described towards the end of the book, I observe to you, that it may excite the imagination, and diminish that spirit of humility, and of a humble hidden life in God, and that, instead, it may stir up a contrary spirit of enterprise, which being the effect of self-love, and proper to the

* While Rosmini was travelling in company with his secretary and servant, uphill, near Nepi, the half-tipsy postillion lost command of the horses, so that they fell into the subjacent field. The carriage tumbled after them, with the before-mentioned, excepting the valet, who seeing the danger, had time to jump on the road. The postillion and horses were much bruised, but Rosmini and his secretary escaped providentially unhurt.

world, is adverse to the simplicity of the gospel and the grace of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, it is necessary to be well grounded in humility and contempt of ourselves, as is inculcated in the first part of the book of Constitutions. Let us ever bear in mind, that our model, after Jesus Christ, is our dear mother, most holy Mary, who lived as the lowliest of poor unobtrusive creatures, and, therefore, God glorified her above all;—and while she abandoned all care of herself to God,—the Almighty operated in her marvels greater than in any other mortal. Justly, then, is she considered by Holy Church as the type of wisdom, because there can be no wiser counsel than to live quietly in God, to exult in His mercies, to render continual praise and thanksgiving for all the works of His providence, without exception. In these sentiments we are here perfectly agreed, and in such feelings for many to be united together is extremely consoling.”

XXIX. Thus Rosmini tried still further to enamour his friend of the Institute at Calvary Mount,—and to prevent any temptation of sojourning in Rome beyond the appointed time. In fact, Gentili, a few days after, wrote a letter, which confirmed the former's suspicions; for, in reply to the wishes for his arrival, he gave equivocal reasons for delay. He urged, that it was necessary to defer his departure until a more favourable opportunity,—it was the more necessary to take this precaution, since the world had already blamed as caprice his wish to become a Jesuit, and that the obstacle caused by his subsequent illness had sanctioned, as it were, this opinion. If ill health was an impediment to his admission into a cloister on the Quirinal, how should he be able to endure a conventual life at the foot of the Alps? This, when known to the world would be considered a greater folly than

the first;—that people would wonder at his retirement to a solitude so remote; and that, finally, his parents, if not gently dealt with, would do all in their power to prevent his departure.” These unusual expressions excited an apprehension in the mind of Rosmini, that such sophisms might produce a fatal effect on his companion; wherefore, he deemed it to be a duty of christian friendship to write a strong and prolix epistle to alarm and admonish him of his danger.

XXX. “The charity which I have for you, (here let me beg of you henceforth to use the same tone of confidence towards myself,) and the desire which you manifest in your letter, that, I should be generous, even at a distance, by making you, not small but large presents, as often as possible, induce me to comply therewith, by making some observations, which I trust you will receive with that brotherly love, with which they are offered. Wherefore, let me advise you to be on your guard against the suggestions of Satan, who will certainly do what he can to frustrate your holy resolutions. I doubt whether I do not see in you a want of generosity, and cowardice instead. Mind, my dear friend, that I say, I doubt; therefore, I do not mean positively; but I wish you to make a diligent examination of yourself, to see if the devil has not succeeded in tempting you to weakness and pusillanimity; in order, that if you discover anything you may immediately remedy the defect, and imitate the magnanimity of Satan’s conqueror—our Divine Master, Jesus Christ. If the infernal tempter perceives that we are resolute, he becomes intimidated, and withdraws after a few attacks. But, if he finds us cowardly in resistance, his assaults continue, and when we exhibit fear, he is sure of victory. We ought, with the royal Psalmist, constantly to pray: ‘Salva me, Domine, a pusillanimitate spiritus

et tempestate.' A mental tempest is sure to be the result of timidity, just as a magnanimous resolve produces serenity. In a generous giver only is found faith in Divine Providence, while the fearful are diffident and deaf to the Divine Word. This I do not say because you prefer uniting yourself with us in the spring rather than in the autumn, but for some other reason mentioned in your dear letter. You seem to be greatly afraid of what the world will say. But, my dear friend, if we fear the idle talk of the world, we shall do nothing for the glory of God. Of nothing have I ever been less afraid than of the vain chatterings of the worldly minded. Take notice, however, that I do not mean you to understand, when two roads meet at the same good end, the one that is less noisy than the other may not be preferred. Charity sometimes requires it. But, I assert, that no good, however trifling, should be neglected for the sake of worldly considerations; otherwise, we shall be urged to do so in matters of greater consequence, if we listen to the world's influence, from which nothing but reproach, not to say persecution, is to be expected. 'The disciple is not above his Master.' Woe be to us if we give way to the world's fallacious yet subtle reasonings.

"We are deceived and ruined if we give credit to its maxims: we wander from Christ's narrow path of righteousness, if we follow the guidance of flesh and blood! You write, 'if the world knew of my departure from Rome—it would deem it a greater folly than the first, &c.' But, permit me to ask (the terms being synonymous), is that really madness what the world calls folly? If it be, then the cross of Christ is a scandal, and the gospel a folly—it is madness to expose one's self to danger and suffering like the Apostles, for Christ's sake, among Barbarians—it

is folly to bear witness to the faith with one's own blood, like the martyrs. O enviable folly! Heaven grant that I may become thus incurably mad! This superhuman folly, I desire—sigh after, and pray for daily, as a most precious gift from the Lord! I am sure that you esteem this folly to be true wisdom. But if that be wisdom which the world calls folly, why not learn to practise this wisdom? Why be ashamed of the term applied by the world to this evangelical science? Why sanction by one's own conduct the judgment of an insensate world? I call it insensate, even including therein one's parents and friends, whether laymen or priests: (for these are sometimes imbued with a worldly spirit). At the tribunal of Jesus Christ shall any one be excused by saying: 'I did not promptly obey your invitation, because the world pronounced it to be folly?' Go then, and get a reward from your master the world—that world, which I have vanquished, and is no more. Such doubtless will be the answer of the Supreme Judge.

"According to your statement, the world will contrast the Quirinal with the foot of the Alps. But Jesus says, '*Veri adoratores adorabunt patrem in spiritu et veritate.*'"

"With regard to your health, the world, according to its wont, would draw a lying inference, not distinguishing between sickness and recovery. As to your coming 'without knowing what you had to do here,' certainly the world knows but little about what is done in holy retreats: but they know who are called out of an insensate world by an impulse of the Spirit of God. I am pretty sure that when Christ was led into the desert, the world knew not what was His purpose. But Jesus Christ did not wait until the world got information thereof. What has the world to do with

this affair? It is our business, and not the world's, and if we pretend not to know what we are going to do, we ourselves also form a part of this insensate world. Is it possible that you are troubled by ignorance of what you shall have here to do? I can tell the world what has been my object in coming to this place. I have come here to fulfil my vocation—to obey the voice of God—to keep aloof from a foolish world—to purify my soul, and secure salvation. That is what one has to do here. Both for you and for me, it is no trifling affair. Woe to him who knows not what to do in the state to which the Lord has called him! O how remote are worldly reasonings from the spirit of our Institute! For charity's sake call yourself to account; beware of the slightest contamination: without being aware of it, we inhale the world's pestiferous and blighting atmosphere.

“You say the world would strenuously oppose your departure; but it could not hinder you if you yourself were determined. The only impediment in the power of the world, is to weaken and overcome your will; nothing more: especially considering that the government under which you live places no obstacles in the way of religious vocations. Have not the saints been contradicted by the world because they despised it? Have they not hated father, mother, brethren, sisters, and all family connections, for the sake of Jesus Christ? Like Saint Jane Frances of Chantel, have they not walked over the prostrate bodies of those most dear, who debarred their passage? The already mentioned heroine, who felt the necessity of Christ's call, did not much fear a world of whose impotence she was well aware, knowing at the same time that God alone has power to bring about or hinder whatever He wills. Therefore, I beg of you to ponder all these things well,

and to examine the most secret recesses of your heart, in order to avoid any mistake in the way wherein you should walk. It is certain that, the greatest obstacles in the path of perfection, and the most formidable to the Saints, are human respects—the love of relations—and self-interest. When these snares of the devil are overcome, we can fly on the wings of divine grace: but not before. The smallest tie is sufficient to bind us to the earth. The words of Jesus Christ are clear: no man can be my disciple, if he does not abandon relatives in a spirit of piety, and renounce all. Those who think to find out a middle road are under a demoniacal illusion. It was not pointed out by Jesus Christ. He stands not in need of us: His call is a merciful favour. One day's delay in corresponding with Divine Grace may be the cause of a man's damnation. This I do not say, let me repeat, to oblige you to come hither this autumn, but I mention it, fearing that you will be strongly assailed by the deceits of the enemy, according to his wont, and I think that fraternal charity, which I owe to you, requires me to lend assistance, by informing you of my apprehensions, and by imploring you, if they are well founded, to prepare a vigorous resistance for the foe. If you listen to the world, and wish to enjoy those human consolations, which are imparted by an intercourse with worldly relatives and friends, you strengthen the fetters, which bind you to the earth. These ties are not less fatal for being pleasing and agreeable. Similar affections have not prevented me from cutting my bonds asunder. I am not conscious of twenty-four hours' delay, in coming to this retreat; were it otherwise, I should feel an everlasting remorse. It is not contrary to the Divine Spirit that you should come here, for one reason more than another. It may

be quite conformable to prudence. But to neglect to come through a dread of the world's displeasure, and fear of offending parents or friends, &c., is to be actuated by a spirit adverse to that of God. I also have a beloved mother, from whom I received letters of advice enjoining me not to leave home. I wish you could see my answer. I have copies of certain letters, and to a world averse to Christ's love, I am sure they would appear too harsh. I plainly told her to desist from importuning me, because she had no right to do so in this affair. I moreover said, that in this matter, not her will but that of my Father and God must be obeyed. Henceforth she ceased to urge me. 'Vade retro Satana,' was the expression of Christ to St. Peter, and it may also be applied to parents. You have obliged me to speak thus imprudently, but I have done so in my own justification, as it seems, you employ as an excuse, my having said, I keep myself secretly here, and contrive to let no one know my intentions. Assuredly it is not necessary that men should know the good we do; but it is necessary to perform good works. This is what my conscience tells me to say to you. Pray then examine yourself thoroughly, according to the rule of Jesus Christ and His saints. When Christ, at the age of twelve years, remained to dispute with the Doctors, He did not make it known to His mother. In this lesson He clearly speaks. The saints also have plainly declared themselves. He is a jealous God: and in the gospel we do not see that He ever endured more than one refusal. Walk, therefore, righteously before Him. Scrutinize your sincerity, in order that you and others be not deceived. There is no sincerity where there exists any affection to the things of earth. In fine, make your examination by the light of eternity, in the presence of

God, and during the silence of worldly rumours and passions. This scrutiny will help you either to repair any defect caused, perhaps, by the devil in this matter, or to confirm and increase your generous resolve, and all other virtues united in the service of Jesus Christ. In this manner you will build on a solid foundation. There is no other solid basis but the security of the cross. I hope you will afford me comfort by adopting this advice, which I consider of the greatest importance to your soul, not only, but also to the salvation of many others. You asked me for a large present; this, I trust, you will find very considerable. Certes, the nature of it is very serious, and the love which impels me to give it you is not less than the subject matter. Ah, my dear friend, the spirit of the Deity we know not, 'unde veniat, aut quo vadat.' (Jo. iii.) We need not soldiers who drink water on bended knee, but those rather, who upright (like Gedeon's chosen warriors) snatched a draught from the flowing stream. Finally, I believe that, in order to enable us to separate from the world, Mary, ever blessed, has obtained for us this retreat."

Sacro Monte Calvario, 22 June, 1830.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

XXXI. To Gentili, who was still unexperienced in spiritual life, this somewhat bitter epistle arrived opportunely. It was wholesome and necessary, in order to counteract the before-mentioned temptations, and to

fortify him against others of a similar nature to come. Indeed, before receiving it, he had to undergo a difficult trial in flattering invitations from two Prelates, viz. Dr. Dubois, bishop of New York, in America; and Dr. Baines, bishop of Siga, and Vicar-Apostolic in the Western district of England. Both these personages contended for his apostolic co-operation in their respective dioceses. The last-named, not content with words, wrote a long and very polite letter to him, requesting that he would accompany some students from the English College, who were to return home in the following autumn, as he wished to appoint him to an office in his new college of Prior Park. He gave a lively description of the beautiful site, and the magnificence of the buildings, with promises also not a little calculated to induce him to accept the offer. This truly was a temptation difficult to overcome, by an enterprising high-minded young man, naturally inclined to missionary duties, and whose warm and pious imagination opened before his eyes a vast field for the exercise of his talents and zeal. However, he had sufficient heavenly light to see that it would be wrong to abandon his first vocation to the Institute of Charity, to run after another; because, to change with levity our former resolutions, is not conformable to the Spirit of God, which is a spirit of constancy and perseverance in good purposes. Wherefore, writing to Rosmini on the subject, Gentili concludes his letter thus: "I am at a loss for words to describe what I would give to be rid of all these temptations. God for ever be praised! But were He to permit the crown of the Chinese empire to be offered to me, I would renounce it, and prefer His Calvary. *'Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi: hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam.'* I deserved hell, and the Lord has

given me Golgotha in exchange! Let them offer me even the empire of a world, I would willingly forego it. Abjection, obscurity, suffering, crosses, and tribulations are my portion; and not opulence, and the dwellings of the great. Were the universe to fall, it would not deter me from my vocation. I cannot contain myself with joy. Since you left Rome, the Lord has given me so much interior light to penetrate and understand the spirit of our Institute, that I would willingly dwell in the bowels of the earth in order to lead an obscure and hidden life."

XXXII. Rosmini soon wrote again in order to confirm him in these good sentiments, and to modify, if expedient, the severity of the preceding letter. "Confiding in the goodness of God, my last letter," he says, "which I cordially and conscientiously wrote, I trust, has opportunely arrived to strengthen you in rejecting worldly considerations, and to have solely in view the Almighty, in whose presence we should labour only for eternal interests. Indeed, I thank God, the Author of all good, who invigorates the weak, because your last letter contains some manly expressions, which assure me that you have placed a lively confidence in Him. With His assistance alone can we acquire true fortitude—overcome our natural inconstancies, and restrain our culpable and almost incorrigible fancy, which deserves to be treated like those labouring under incurable mental alienation. S. Francis of Sales termed self-love a great cheat. The imagination also is another great deceiver. Withal, they both seem often together in partnership. Since you appear to comprehend thoroughly the spirit of our Institute, keep yourself in the greatest possible simplicity, humbling yourself without more ado. How I rejoice to learn that the Lord enables you to taste the ineffable delight of an

obscure and hidden life ! This is the golden key of heaven. My heart exults when I see our dear brethren advance daily more and more in this wisdom ! Humility and poverty of spirit, in the grace of Jesus Christ—therein is all our wealth ; O my God, give us thereof in abundance !”

XXXIII. Of these sweet and affectionate words, Gentili stood truly in need, as the tone of the letter, dated 20th June, had appeared rather sharp and severe. On which account, he gently complained to his friend, if he had too harshly interpreted his phrases, and not in accordance with his intentions. Nevertheless, he confessed that his immoderate imagination required a strong bridle, and that he had used certain expressions which justified his friend's severity. He avowed at the same time, that nothing should ever divert him from his vocation to the Institute of Charity—not the prattle or derision of the world, for he felt himself ready to proceed from Rome to Calvary, even if he were to be made the object of insult and scorn along the road—and on his arrival, to be treated as the reproach and outcast of the human race. He would no longer be prevented by human respect, or carnal affection for his parents, to whom, as he might attest before heaven, his pecuniary aid was not superfluous. Indeed, so detached from them did he now feel, that if they prostrated themselves at the gate of the city to oppose his departure, he would not hesitate, after the example of the Saints, to pass on in obedience to God, who called him to Calvary. Finally, he did not omit to mention his fear, that perhaps, the devil, invidious of the common good, had excited a mutual distrust: and hence he begged of his friend not to doubt the purity of his intentions, or his unshaken fidelity to his vocation.

XXXIV. These mournfully expressed sentiments of Gentili, entirely tranquillised Rosmini's mind : wherefore he made not a moment's delay in sending him the following most cordial and beautiful letter:

" Mount Calvary, Domodossola,

" August 2, 1830.

" MY MOST DEAR AND BELOVED BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,

" Your letter has consoled me. I am thankful to our same Lord for giving you sentiments of detachment from the world—your family—and self-interest, and I am still more grateful for the disposition which you evince to come this autumn, as a proof of the sentiments you express. Be jealous of these feelings as of a precious gift from God, and let us pray together that by our fault, this valuable and blessed treasure be never lost. Blessed is he to whom it hath not been revealed by flesh and blood, but by the Heavenly Father. Certainly, as Isaias says, in the high places nobody can inhabit, but he who, 'obturat aures suas, ne audiat sanguinem.' That Being, who has inspired us with these sentiments, will give us the strength to accomplish them. Between saying and doing, the interval is long, and in the meantime Satan sleeps not. Neither will Christ sleep—if we watch with Him. Withal, even our vigilance is the pure gift of Christ. Let us then become, little and humble, and pray unceasingly.

"As regards your coming hither this autumn, I do not mean to avail myself of your voluntary offer by obliging you to do so, but I willingly consent to your remaining in Rome until Spring. I am satisfied with seeing how your will is affected. Without a pliancy of will, what can be done with us? Absolutely nothing. Nevertheless, I acknowledge my dread of the devil's wiles, in your regard, during this time, in which you have

not escaped the 'snare of the hunter.' Having read, as well as experienced in myself, the refinement and subtlety of the foe, when it is a question of disarranging whatever he holds in hatred.

"You must not on this account think that, I am suspicious of you: no, my dear brother. I distrust man—I distrust myself—I distrust the sin-stricken flesh of this unstable heart—this ignorant mind—and this presumptuous spirit, which I have inherited from my first parents, like other men—my companions in misery. I fear then, undisguisedly, for you during all the time you are among so many relations and other seductions: especially after attaining the priesthood, if God grants this grace; because the subtle enemy may enlist devotion in the war against you. However, my fear of you is not so great as my confidence in Jesus Christ, in whom, by divine mercy, I so tranquilly repose, that, for a long time, no accident has been able to disturb me. 'Confidite, ego vici mundum:' Behold the watchword of our humility.

"However, I will tell you the reason why our dear brethren desired to see you here so much this autumn. Besides the general one of seeing you far from the world at the foot of the cross with us, they had another. I came hither on Ashwednesday, 1828, to begin in a certain way my Noviciate, which was interrupted by a journey to Rome. At present, it must be resumed, and we are all anxious to do so. Ashwednesday next being the commencement of the fourth Lent, we have resolved to begin on that day a rather more solemn noviciate, and more conformable to the constitutions. At the expiration of the Lent, or soon after, we propose to make a promise of future vows—to elect a Superior, and confide to him the care and direction of the little house. Now, they desired that you might

have a personal share in these transactions. But, if the contrary be God's will, we shall be resigned. You will unite yourself, as you best can, by holy exercises in Rome—and thus, even at a distance, we may assist one another. Write to me about your sacerdotal orders, but even in this affair, I would wish you to be indifferent. Excuse my writing in this manner, and for charity's sake be not offended. I do it because I desire you every perfection. Let me repeat, you I do not distrust—but our common humanity. Act in the same way towards me in every thing, and you will oblige me eternally. Wherefore, if you are determined on being promoted to the priesthood this autumn, proceed calmly as if you would not be disconcerted, were you counselled to put it off till another time. I bear ever in mind the maxim of S. Francis of Sales, who used to say that he was a foe to hastiness. Whatever we do then, let us not be in a hurry, or anxious, or over obstinate. That there is any tendency of this kind in you, I am not willing to believe. Nevertheless, suffer these maxims to be repeated, though you may not need them. They are praiseworthy in themselves, and let us be pleased to be reciprocally reminded of them. By this means our fancies will deceive us less, because haste propels the imagination, and placidity calms and restrains it. We must then give no credit to the fallacies of imagination, the servant of self-love. Let us not soar aloft, but walk in the lowliness wherein God has placed us. The poor in spirit are the poor of Christ."

CHAPTER VII

GENTILI'S SOJOURN IN ROME IS PROLONGED BY AN ATTACK OF FEVER.—HE IS ORDAINED PRIEST, AND CELEBRATES HIS FIRST MASS.—SENTIMENTS ON THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE.

XXXV. While opening their minds to each other in this manner, the two friends felt themselves drawn together by closer ties of mutual affection and esteem. The good and generous love the freedom of truth as much as they abhor the meanness of adulation, while on the contrary, the narrow-minded and the vicious cannot live together without flattering and deceiving one another.* The appointed time was drawing near for Gentili's leaving Rome, and Rosmini had already given detailed instructions, and procured the necessary means for the desired journey of his friend after his ordination. But it was God's will to disappoint both by delay in their mutual desire; for, on the Octave of the Assumption, Gentili was again attacked by the tertian ague, and other ailments. These did not, however, prevent him from attending the usual examination of ecclesiastical candidates on the day prescribed. By

. * It is an oriental tradition, that Alexander the Great said to one of his old counsellors: "I am not satisfied with you: I know myself to be a man, and subject to error, and yet you have never corrected me: if you are not aware of my faults your ignorance makes you unworthy of the post you occupy: if you are conscious of them, your silence amounts to high Treason." Such heroic language was, perhaps, affected by the Grecian monarch, but it is sincere in the disciples of Jesus Christ.

the use of bark, he managed to suspend the fever for some days, during which interval, he wrote to his friend, praising God for having, by this accident, tried his patience, and also his indifference about holy things, even the priesthood. From this dignity, formidable even to angels, Gentili would have humbly withdrawn, in imitation of S. Francis of Assisi, S. Benedict, and many other great saints, who, though gifted with extraordinary virtue and science, could never be induced to become priests. Indeed, the first-named, who was a deacon, thought he had attained too high a degree in the holy ministry, and in speaking or writing to his friends, he used to observe that whenever in his sacred vestments, he assisted at the altar, he was quite confounded at the idea of appearing like an assassin, who had disguisedly intruded himself at the banquet of his sovereign Lord.

XXXVI. But true humility is not wont to contradict lawful obedience: wherefore, Gentili would have no other guide to determine his promotion to sacerdotal orders. He consulted the Abate Anivitti, his spiritual director, and other ecclesiastical superiors. He asked advice also of his dear friend Rosmini, who wrote him a letter, from which the following is an extract: "Your's of the 26th of August has afflicted me according to the flesh, hearing of your sickness, but on the other hand, it has afforded me consolation according to the spirit, in which we live. I heartily thank God in learning, that you consider as tender signs of His love, your bodily inconveniences: and you are right, my dear friend, in thinking so,—they are pledges of a singular, precious, and sublime affection. Although I am rather too impatient, when I call to mind my habitual infirmities, I acknowledge them, nevertheless, to be Divine favours, for which I cannot be too grateful

to God. There can be no better time than sickness, for the exercise of patience and humility. To feel how imminent ever is the dissolution of our bodies, and that perchance suddenly, is a great help towards comprehending the divine judgments. At this thought, vain presumption is humbled, and the mendacity of our pride gives place to the truth of our own nothingness. The slightest confidence in ourselves becomes extinct, and is succeeded by a tender trust in God alone. Thus it is, my dear friend: it is sweet to resign one's self in the hands of Divine Providence, without curiosity about the future. To live in uncertainty and perfectly tranquil in the hands of God, was the desire of the saints, and is a disposition most dear to heaven. From your last, I infer that these are your feelings, and I am not surprised if in this humble and entire conformity to the Divine will, you find, as you tell me, great repose and constancy in your good resolutions. It is pleasing also to learn your equanimity relative to the priesthood, in compliance with the counsel of your spiritual directors. The lowly feelings you experience when robed as a deacon, proceed from a heaven-descended light, which manifests the truth. Our original corruption, ignorance, innate pride, and hereditary concupiscence, render us so vile and contemptible, as to defy description. It is owing to God's pure mercy and grace infused into our souls at Baptism, that our spirit is vivified, although our flesh is mortal, and generates death. Wherefore the more we abase ourselves, the nearer we approach to truth."

XXXVII. Having been enjoined to prepare himself for sacerdotal orders, he was first examined, then retired for a short time to a monastery near Rome, and finally on the 18th of September, was ordained Priest. In all this, Gentili piously believed that the Lord's special

protection, and that of His blessed mother, had been manifested towards him. In fact, reflecting on the excessive heat of the season—the insalubrity of the Roman atmosphere at the beginning of autumn—and the obstinate malignity of tertian agues caught at this time, it appeared to him almost miraculous that he should have been able to study enough for his examinations—to go through ten days of spiritual exercises—and bear the fatigue of the long ceremonial performed at an ordination, without being prevented by febrile weakness. In this idea, he was confirmed by an accident, which happened to him during the sacred ceremony. Being prostrate on the ground, as the rubrics prescribe, during the Litany of the Saints, the blood flowed from his nostrils in such abundance, as to bathe the carpet on the floor. Describing the case in a letter to Rosmini, he says, “I called to mind the blood which issued from the pores of our Redeemer’s face at the commencement of His sacrifice in the garden of Gethsemani ; and I offered my blood to Him, as He had offered His for my sake in His sorrowful passion—strongly wishing to die for Him as He had died for me—a martyr of love. While seeing myself in that inconvenient posture, with blood flowing from my head, and fearing to stain therewith my sacred vestments, I united my pains with His sufferings. But, happily, in my trouble I was not comfortless, and a copious perspiration coming on, the blood ceased to flow, and I was enabled to continue in choir until the end of the sacred function.”

XXXVIII. He wished for the sake of greater recollection and piety, to offer up his first sacrifice in the subterranean chapel at the catacombs of St. Sebastian. But, in compliance with the pious request of an Aunt, who was superioress of a convent, near St. Mary

Major's, and in accordance with the spirit of the Institute of Charity, which recommends its members to second the honest exigencies of their neighbours—he gave up his private inclination, and celebrated mass on the High Altar of the Conventual Church the day after his ordination, the 19th of September, the Octave of the Holy name of Mary. The second Mass, he offered to God in behalf of his beloved friend Rosmini, and companions. During the sacred function, there occurred a thunder storm, which was to him an occasion of pious thoughts, as he remembered the darkness and convulsions of nature accompanying a Man-God's sanguinary oblation on Golgotha. All these devout coincidences, with grateful sentiments towards God and His Blessed Mother, he penned in a letter to Rosmini, who received these tidings with spiritual joy. By his confrères, the last named had been elected Head of the Institute, and to the affection of a friend, he might now add that of a Father towards Gentili, who wished also on his part, to congratulate with him on his election as chief, and to go as soon as possible to Domodossola to commence his noviciate, under the direction of the new superior. But the approaching inclemency of the season, and his weakness as an invalid, obliged him to defer his departure till spring.

XXXIX. Having made arrangements to spend the winter in Rome, he applied himself to the study of moral and dogmatic divinity, and also to that of philosophy, in which he was guided by Rosmini's "Essay on the Origin of Ideas." Writing to the author on the subject, Gentili says, "I have resumed the study of Ethics, and I learn with great pleasure that you are preparing a Treatise on Conscience" (published for the first time in Milan, 1839).

XLI. To these learned pursuits, he added works of

charity towards his neighbour, according to the spirit of the Institute. Among others, as no one else was found willing to undertake the task, he engaged to give familiar instructions and spiritual exercises to a pious congregation of poor boys, called the Ignorantelli. His two first discourses were on his favourite topic, Most Holy Mary—her festival recurring at the time.

XLII. His superior, Rosmini approved and encouraged him in this work of mercy, reminding him of our Divine Master's words: "Sinite parvulos venire ad me." With regard to his philosophical studies, he remarked as follows: "I rejoice to hear, my dear friend, that you are investigating my treatise 'on the Origin of Ideas.' It will be very useful to us, I am persuaded, to dive deeply into that matter, of which all scholars are much in need, especially those who apply to the study of Theological science. I am consoled by letters from learned personages, who assure me that my work contains principles that will become the common doctrine of the schools. Heaven grant it may be so, for I have no hope of seeing people's minds settled, unless common principles of philosophy be admitted, and generally agreed upon among the good."

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST CALL TO THE ENGLISH MISSION.—PRELIMINARY DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME.

XLIII. While Gentili was thus profitably employing himself during his winter sojourn in Rome, Satan also seized the opportunity of placing fresh obstacles in the

way of his vocation. Aware that his noble prey was not to be entrapped by the bait of vain and earthly aggrandisement, the astute enemy transformed himself into an angel of light, and taking advantage of his inexperience and fervid imagination, he tried to inveigle him into his net, by inflaming the new priest's zeal for the salvation of souls. Happily for him he was now tied by a certain religious obedience, as well as friendship, to Rosmini, who perceiving the danger in time, used all his charitable vigilance, and even authority, to prevent those diabolical snares from injuring his imprudent friend, and to turn them to the latter's private advantage, not only, but also to the general good.

XLIV. He was still residing as a pensioner in the Irish College, when the rector of that establishment, after dinner on the festival of St. Stanislas Koska, commenced with Gentili a conversation to the following effect : I have to propose to you a work of charity calculated to produce much good, and which appears to me worthy of your acceptance. A young English gentleman, the son of one of England's wealthiest landlords, has recently arrived in Rome. He was converted to the Catholic faith while a student at Cambridge; and the principal object of his journey hither was to consult about the choice of a state of life; and being advised to select the matrimonial state, and therein to promote, as much as possible, the spiritual welfare of his neighbours, he is very desirous of accomplishing this holy design. In order to make a beginning, he has requested me to find a learned, pious, and zealous priest, to proceed forthwith to England, and to establish a mission on his estate. With this intention I went to say mass this morning in the Chapel of St. Stanislas, and my companion also communicated, with a view to our obtaining light from heaven in this affair. During my

supplications I felt myself strongly urged to make the case known to you, and to beg of you not to refuse an undertaking which God offers you through my medium." Gentili, who was doubtful whether this proposal was an inspiration or a temptation, asked for time to consider the subject. The day after, he went to the Rector's apartment, where he found the devout young Englishman, who, after asking his blessing, joined the Rector in entreating him to assume the enterprise. To Gentili the proposal was tempting and dangerous, having to decide whether he should prefer this vast field opened to his apostolic charity, or the humble and hidden life which he knew was reserved for him in the religious house at Domodossola. Nevertheless, being divinely illumined, and faithful to his vocation to the Institute, he answered: that God was his witness how he felt for the spiritual destitution of poor Catholics in England,—and how happy he should be to become one of those who laboured in that vineyard; but that he was already engaged—considering it to be God's holy will—to the rising Institute of Charity, which had just commenced under the direction of the celebrated and pious Abate, Rosmini. Wherefore, he continued, I should be wanting in duty to my calling, and to the obedience I owe my Superior, were I to accept, unconditionally, your proposition. However, I can say this, that I do not deem it impossible for the Institute of Charity to undertake the mission on these two conditions: viz., that, in the first place, its establishment be deferred for a year or two—and secondly, that you employ three or four, instead of one individual.

XLV. These conditions being acceded to, Gentili wrote to his Superior Rosmini, an account of the whole affair, saying, among other things, "can it be true that

God wills me, who am so full of ignorance, misery, and vice, and without prudence, (I speak sincerely,) to go to England? I, who for so long a time acted the fool among the English in Rome—I, who have given them so much scandal—I, in fine, who am the outcast of the world, what could I do there? Increase the number of sinners. Ah, my dear father, the veil of my pride and self-love is at times rent asunder, and my most dear Mother helps me to recognise myself in the mirror of truth. Truly, I once desired earnestly to proceed to England, and there to shed my blood. But, although the desire has not, at least the presumption has fallen, of being among those elected to remedy the evils of that unhappy nation. I beg always of God to send thither men of holiness and learning, and not one who, by his ignorance and sin, might do injury to the Lord's cause. Were I among those commissioned, with what reason might I not exclaim, Poor unhappy being that I am! for there, instead of being in an obscure, hidden position, I should be exposed to continual warfare, with heresy not only, but with its effects, consisting in corruption of the heart, and low, degrading vice. And where are my weapons? My own faults. But enough, the prospect is too distant. 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'"

XLVI. Rosmini answered as follows, on the 18th of January, 1831: "I delay not a moment in answering your letter, in which I see still further proofs of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ's mercy, for which we ought to be grateful, shewing ourselves desirous to suffer something for His sake, and if possible, to give our life-blood for His glory. Indeed this, as we were created expressly for it, should be the main object of our desires and existence upon earth. The interests of the English Catholics I have much at heart; and

there is little in my power that I would not do to promote their welfare. I think I should neglect nothing that Providence enabled me to do for their advantage; and worthless though it be, I would be ready, for their sake, to shed my blood. I have pondered all that you wrote to me, in order to find the means of complying with Mr. Philipps' desire as soon as possible, in accordance with the prudent rules and constitutions of our order. If you feel inclined to undertake the mission, I opine that you had better make first a year's noviciate with us, to prepare yourself for the work, by learning and practising our rules. Then I shall be ready to give you two companions to go and establish a house wherever Mr. Philipps pleases. Though you make but one year's noviciate here, I do not dispense with the other, which you must continue while labouring in the ministry; for we are obliged so to get on just as other religious Institutes had to do, until they were firmly settled. Tranquilly ruminate upon all these things in the presence of God, by means of prolonged and fervent prayer;—and when you feel resolved, communicate the matter to Mr. Philipps, as the subject I consider as no longer doubtful. Be not apprehensive about the manner of concluding this treaty, or over solicitous concerning the means; for you may be sure that God will provide, and if it be His work, His adorable Providence will arrange everything."

XLVII. This answer, which accorded so well with Gentili's own wishes, seemed not only to cut down, but even to uproot the temptation to separate himself from the Institute if found incompatible with the English mission. But finding his arts deluded in one direction, Satan made another effort to ruin the enterprise at its commencement. A few weeks had elapsed since Gentili had agreed upon the business with Mr. Phil-

lipps, according to the Abate Rosmini's directions. Rejoicing in the hope that they should meet in England at the end of a twelvemonth, Gentili called one day upon his friend, and was surprised to learn that his mind was greatly altered concerning the Institute and its members. This was owing to some unfavourable reports, which he had heard from a certain personage, and seconded (strange to say,) by a religious who had thrown discredit on the new society. These discouraging rumours had also reached the ears of the Pope's Vicar, at that time Cardinal Zurla; for Gentili having called upon him shortly after about some other business, and making allusion to the projected English mission, his Eminence smilingly observed that he already knew something about it, and that he had on his table a description of the Institute of Charity, which had been brought to him for examination. His Eminence added that he admired the ways of Divine Providence with regard to this new society, and concluded by asking news about Rosmini and his establishment at Calvary House, &c. In his narrative of these circumstances, Gentili makes the following reflections. "As regards myself, I am ready for all; and if the Lord permits these calumnies to subject me to persecution, I shall offer manifold thanks to God, considering that His true disciples were usually thus treated. However, I regret that these zealots, supposing them to be well intentioned, do not observe the precept of love towards their neighbour, condemning us, as they do, through mere suspicion and rash judgment."

XLVIII. Withal, Mr. Phillipps's good faith was not long imposed upon; for going to visit him again, in company with another pious and learned priest, Gentili succeeded in completely undeceiving him, and in removing all misrepresentations from his mind concern-

ing the nature of the Institute. He moreover assured him that himself and companions would not set out on their journey for England without the approval and benediction of the Pope. It was gratifying to Mr. Phillipps to have his doubts entirely cleared up. For he acknowledged that he was inclined to believe that the accusations against the society, from the beginning, were groundless and false. In this favourable opinion, he was still further confirmed by a letter which Gentili had received about that time from the Abate Rosmini, who remarked, "with regard to the charges you mention being brought against the Institute of Charity, I do not think them worthy of notice. I must be satisfied with the approbation of the Holy Father, God's Vicar upon earth, and without whose consent I have done, and intend to do nothing. For your particular consolation on this subject, I may tell you that his Holiness has deigned to write me a letter, of which the last words are as follows: 'As a pledge of our paternal benevolence to you, our dear son, as well as to your Institute of Charity, so piously devoted to us, we affectionately impart our apostolical benediction.' " *

* The original Brief, in extenso, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

GREGORIUS, PP. XVI.

Dilecte Fili, salutem et apostolicam Benedictionem. Nul-
lam quidem proveteri tuo erga nos studio Nobis erat dubium,
quin singulare quoddam gaudium esses ex Nostra ad summum
pontificatum profectione percepturus; sed tamen valde Nos
delectarunt litteræ tuæ, quibus hoc ipsum studium confirmas,
et animum tuum, cæteroquin jam Nobis perspectum, Petri
Cathedræ singulari pietate ac fide devotum prosteris. Cum
vero nihil optemus magis quam prorsus impartanto huic quod
arcano divinæ providentiæ judicio Nobis impositum est, oneri
infirmis nostra bonorum ad Dominum precibus adjuvetur,
multo magis auxit jucunditatem votorum pro Nobis tuorum sig-

CHAPTER IX.

GENTILI MISLED BY THE SEMBLANCE OF A GREATER GOOD, AGAIN DELAYS HIS DEPARTURE FROM ROME.—A LETTER FROM HIS SUPERIOR UNMASKING THE DECEIT, INDUCES HIM TO SET OUT ON HIS JOURNEY.

XLIX. Having happily overcome this temptation, after fresh orders from Domodossola, Gentili made preparations to travel thither on the first of May, with an Irish companion, in apostolic fashion, that is to say, on foot, without bag or baggage. To adopt this plan, they were led by the example of a devout Hibernian Lady, who, during the winter, had had the courage to make a pilgrimage from a remote part of Ireland to Rome, in order to obtain from the Holy See the faculty of introducing into her own country, the perpetual adoration of the most holy Sacrament. Her request was granted by Pope Gregory XVI., who had been just raised to St. Peter's Chair. Gentili's projected pilgrim-

nificatio. Ille enim qui de se dictum voluit; desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus; acceptum, uti confidimus, Te habebit deprecatores, cui, preter cætera, tot pauperes beneficentiæ tuæ testes apud thronum ejus gratiæ patrocinantur. Qua propter maximas tibi pro tuo in Nos officio gratias agimus, ac pignus propensæ paternæque voluntatis nostræ Apostolicam Benedictionem Tibi ipsi, Dilecte Fili, ac tuo isti pie Nobis dedito Instituto Caritatis amanter impertimur.

Datum Romæ apud S. Mariam Majorem die 9 Aprilis, anni 1831. Pontificatus Nostri, anno 1.

GREGORIUS, PP. XVI. .

age, however, was thwarted by a new temptation more dangerous than any of its predecessors.

L. Among the many establishments which exist for the promotion of christian piety, and the salvation of souls in Rome, there was one termed the *Opera pia degli Esercizj*. Its object was to assemble together the poorest and most destitute children—to instruct them in their christian duties, and prepare them for their first communion. It also undertook, at stated times, to gather together poor adults, ignorant or neglectful of religion, and to enable them, in retirement, to go through a regular course of spiritual exercises. A pious Canon, named Muccioli, who was the originator of the good work, used to engage the best disposed of these poor fellows to return on Sundays and festivals to his house and garden, where, after prayer, and the singing of canticles, he provided innocent amusement for them, and thus succeeded in preventing many from relapsing into bad company. There existed, however, a great obstacle to this pious institution working efficiently and permanently for the public good; this was the want of zealous and exemplary Priests, who would, solely for the love of God, and the salvation of souls, gratuitously assist in preaching, administering the Sacraments, &c. Gentili was earnestly solicited to become a volunteer in this good work. He objected at first, that it was incompatible with the obedience he owed his Superior, not to defer a journey already too long delayed; but the request being urged with greater importunity, and deluded by specious pretexts, he gave way, and promised his assistance. To a class of these untutored youths, sixty-four in number, he preached the eternal truths with a zeal and eloquence that was natural to him, and with such effect, that his uncouth auditors were soon excited to sighs and tears of compunction.

They reconciled themselves to God in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and left the retreat apparently sanctified. This success was calculated to produce an impression more easily imagined than described, on the heart of a Priest, especially young, ardent, and talented, and to attach him strongly to the sacred ministry of the word. No wonder, then, that Gentili became enamoured of his recently assumed office, and that Satan made the most of it to divert him from his design of retiring to the religious solitude of Monte Calvario.

LL. He now began to imagine seriously that God had destined him to be the life and mainstay of that pious work, wherein was presented to his view a wide field of charity to cultivate by the conversion of obstinate sinners, and the instruction of the most destitute class of society. He moreover opined that this mission was not incompatible with his vocation to the Institute of Charity, since such works of christian mercy, when there was a Divine and human call, should be preferred to others of a more brilliant character in the eyes of the world. The conditional requisite he fancied evident in the result of his first labours, and in the pressing demands of some clergymen connected with the place, that he would continue his services. Besides, if he were to get a community of members belonging to the Institute of Charity, to take charge of this pious establishment, he fancied that, like other religious associations, the Institute would have a permanent residence in the metropolis of the Catholic world, and thereby become more known and esteemed by the Church at large. Nevertheless, being still uncertain whether to go or to remain was conformable to God's will, he thought proper to remove every doubt by consulting the Cardinal Vicar, and even the Pope himself.

Owing to an affectionate esteem for the Abate Rosmini, whose disciple and associate they knew Gentili to be, these high personages soon granted the latter an audience, and both advised him on the subject in question, to inform himself well, beforehand, of the views entertained by the present administrators of the establishment about confiding it to the Institute. He was also recommended not to communicate the matter to Rosmini until the negotiation seemed likely to prove successful.

LII. Pleased with this reception and advice, to which more importance was attached than was needed, he wrote to Rosmini a somewhat mysteriously worded letter, apologising for his delay by intimating that a very serious affair detained the writer in Rome; and that, owing to the injunction of a superior authority, he could not just now enter more fully into an explanation of the matter. Gentili afterwards went in quest of the Canon Muccioli, and informing him of a recent interview with the Pope and Cardinal, he wished to know exactly what were the Canon's intentions. The good Priest, on hearing that the enquiry came from such high quarters, expressed himself ready to confide the concern to a religious corporation, of which he himself would willingly become a member, or a guest, in order to spend the last years of his life in devout peace; hoping that any opposition on the part of his fellow-directors might be overcome by a gentle solicitation, or the Pope's interference. These statements were repeated by the Canon to the Cardinal Vicar, who sent for Gentili, and gave him to understand that the key of the house had been given up, and that, to conclude the negotiation, it was to be regretted that Rosmini himself was not in Rome, in order that this pious work might be speedily undertaken for the spiritual and material

benefit of the poor of so great a city. In fine, he recommended that a detailed account be sent forthwith to Rosmini; and his Eminence also gave a note of invitation, written with his own hand, to be inserted in Gentili's letter to his Superior.

LIII. From the first enigmatical letter, the prudent Superior soon inferred that his friend had been caught by a bait of the astute enemy; wherefore, to meet the imminent peril, without delay, he wrote as follows: "I can neither praise nor blame the nature of the business you allude to, as you keep it a mysterious secret to yourself. I may tell you, however, that if you are sincere in giving me the title which I so unworthily bear, viz., of your Father and Superior in Christ, your mysterious obscurity appears strange. I add, that although I do not blame you, the affair must be very weighty to make you defer your departure; because, at the present time the first and most important of all affairs is to train ourselves. After that, if God pleases, we may be better able to serve our neighbour. Yes, my dear friend, to speak sensibly, we ought to have nothing else so much at heart, as to consider seriously and regularly the object we have in view. Whatever else diverts us from this straightforward path, I consider to be a temptation of the devil. An act of charity, or a neighbourly kindness, is all very well when opportune; but if called by God to enter the religious state, and under pretext of attending to his neighbour, a person says to his Superiors, 'At present I do not wish to make my novitiate, but to attend to something else,' this would be to give up the reality for an appearance of good. For charity's sake, my dear Gentili, let us not be deceived. Write to me instantly. These your repeated delays from month to month, cause me pain and apprehension; and the reason why I do not clearly

see. Go on more calmly. Tell me your whole mind, without concealing anything. If you do not begin, you can make no progress; and if the English mission be in accordance with the will of the Lord, every day you prolong your sojourn in Rome, is another day's dilatoriness in the execution of that project. I speak the truth, if what you hide from me be not something extraordinary that I dare not surmise: you ought to flee quickly from Rome, getting up at midnight, so to say, in order to hasten what, to you, ought to be the most desirable, viz., the moment of coming amongst us. Thus saints have acted. Secondary considerations are instruments of Satan to arrest the christian on his road, and to make him deviate therefrom with injury and shame. Withal, if the Holy Father has ordered you to be silent, in that case I do not wish you to communicate the business to me; on the contrary, I desire you to keep it secret. However, from what I have written, and now write, you need not suppose that I am in a hurry, or impatient about the affairs of our society; as, by the grace of God, this long time past I have had no such anxiety, and I am perfectly resigned to the will of the Supreme Ruler, who alone knows the proper time and place for everything."

LIV. But, when Gentili's letter of the 25th of June unveiled the whole affair, and seeing how really different it was to the imaginings of his inexperienced friend, Rosmini thought it high time to conclude the matter categorically. Wherefore, on the first of July he wrote to the following effect: "Your last letter has caused me great affliction; I see therein that you are under the control of your imagination. Into how many fallacies and delusions have you not fallen! However pious the work you aim at, you could not accomplish it, because you were called to train yourself in the Insti-

tute of Charity. If your vocation be genuine, this is the good work, which now becomes you. The next is nought else but a distraction, misdirecting you out of your proper sphere. A traveller who stops at every little pathway to discover whither it leads, quits the direct high road to his destination, which, perhaps, he never reaches. If, as was observed before, you are called to the Institute, it is levity, not to say presumption, to allow yourself to be drawn into inopportune undertakings. Did not the Cardinal Vicar himself grant you leave to depart, when he knew you had received the order? Why then remain? You say, that you felt an inspiration to do so. But I wish you had fewer inspirations and more firmness, and more obedience above all. This following your own whims and fancies, which divert you from what is suggested by your superior and enjoined by your vocation, fills me with pain and apprehension. You ask me to pray God to grant you a little humility, of which you feel the need; and I reply, that I will heartily do so, for it seems to me that you greatly require it. You speak in the tone of a man inspired: surely you must entertain a high opinion of yourself! You even talk heroically, saying that you are resolved to make your pilgrimage on foot, '*sine baculo et sine pera*.' My dear friend, I am not contented with mere words; the facts are, that you have not travelled hither; that you have been building castles in the air; and that you have imprudently committed yourself in many things. In your letter, you heap together so many ideas, you bring together so many personages, that I hardly know with which of your indiscretions I must first begin. But let me tell you, that this talking with so many about our affairs, and your acting as my procurator, are not entirely in accordance with the spirit of our Insti-

tute, which recommends us rather to be unobtrusive, humble, and contented. You speak of persecutions; how can it be otherwise where there is so much talkativeness and imprudence? You must not imagine that every persecution is for justice' sake. There are persecutions which a man brings on himself by his own folly. It was highly indiscreet of you to ask an audience of the Supreme Pontiff for the solution of doubts, which proceeded from an over-heated imagination, and from a lack of simple christian docility. Is not the right royal road before you when you are called to the Institute of Charity, and the Superior warns you that the time is come? To wish to turn from it is not the way to reach the goal. The triumphant style in which you apologise for seeking, without my orders, an interview with the Pope, gives me so much displeasure, that I must disown you, if you do not acknowledge your fault and inconsiderate behaviour. What temerity and presumption induced you to negotiate so many things without first requesting to know my opinion? And when you were doubtful, why not write to me immediately and wait for my advice, instead of going to the Pope? Had you done so, how many false steps would you not have avoided? But you feared, perchance, I would give suggestions contrary to your wishes, and hence you desired to get the words of the Pontiff as a shield to protect you while acting in conformity with your own pleasure. But, away with these devices! Let us be actuated by simplicity alone. We want no subtle diplomatist. Our Institute is not benefited by similar manœuvres; nay, it could not exist by such means. The extreme kindness of the Holy Father towards me has induced him to be affable to you, but I will let him know, if necessary, that I had nothing to do with your proceeding, and that I am grieved you

should have abused his benignity, and that, if you do not amend, I shall no longer recognise you as one of our body. Besides, you say, that you several times sought an audience of the Holy Father, since his exaltation to the throne, in order to congratulate with him in the name of our society. But, who gave you the commission? Who made you its ambassador? Your own fanciful notions made you think yourself the representative of a society which you did not even consult, much less get its authorization. How many mistakes have we here? I am ashamed when I think of the pretty credit you procure in Rome to myself and the poor Institute, exhibiting yourself as our general commissary and plenipotentiary envoy. But God's will be done; my sins have, no doubt, deserved it. Let me, however, tell you plainly, that I admit no more excuses, and that I insist upon an acknowledgment of your faults. Moreover, if you have not hitherto deceived me, and if you have a true vocation to the Institute of Charity, I order you to set out on your journey to Domodossola, forthwith, and not on foot, (as it would be tempting God with your frail constitution,) but by coach."

L.V. At the same time he wrote to the Cardinal vicar, in acknowledgment of his invitation, to found the pious work in Rome, respectfully representing that the time had not yet come to establish the Institute there, both on account of the paucity of its members, and of the obstacles that interfered with peacefully undertaking the proposed work in the metropolis of the Catholic world. He also intimated to His Eminence that Gentili had acted independently of his advice, deluded by his over ardent fancy, and ill-regulated zeal: for which reason, he prayed the Cardinal to exhort him to leave, without delay, for Domodossola.

LVI. The first mentioned letter was calculated to

put Gentili's virtue unequivocally to the test. No tree, unless deeply rooted, could have weathered such a gale. But the good priest had acted imprudently but not maliciously. It was an error of the imagination, rather than a mistake of the heart. There were perhaps secondary views, which rendered the abandonment of his own country both painful and difficult: but these had not been able to supplant his principal end in fulfilling the will of God, by embracing a perfect life in the Institute of Charity. No sooner, therefore, did he receive his superior's letter, than he saw through the deceit of his own self-love, and the wiles of the devil. Struck with shame and sorrow, he wrote to his superior immediately, thanking him for his forbearance—acknowledging and aggravating his own faults, and craved pardon. Moreover, grieving that his defects had rendered him unworthy of his vocation, he promised that as soon as some indispensable affairs were settled, he would quietly leave Rome for Civita Vecchia—thence take the steamer for Genoa—and finally proceed by land, to join his brethren at Monte Calvario. In fact, towards the middle of the following August, he suddenly left Rome with so much secrecy, that his own family did not know of his departure, until a letter dated the 29th of August, announced his happy arrival at the last mentioned place.

BOOK THE SECOND,

CONTAINS A NARRATIVE OF GENTILI'S LIFE, FROM HIS
ENTRANCE INTO THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY, UNTIL HIS
ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VALLEY OF OSSOLA—ORIGIN OF
THE SANCTUARY CALLED MONTE CALVARIO.

LVII. Journeying along the magnificent Sempione road, in a north-western direction, the traveller no sooner leaves the smiling shores of the Lago Maggiore, near Fariolo, than he enters a defile formed by two chains of mountains, which, for nearly six leagues, run parallel to each other. At the foot of these mountains is a plain about a mile in breadth, irrigated by the Toce, a river, which rises in the glaciers of Formazza, and flows with serpentine meanderings into the before-mentioned lake. If in its course, it fertilizes the meadows, at times, also, when swollen by the melting of Alpine snows, it devastates the fields and pastures which extend along its banks. To escape these destructive inundations, the greater part of the neighbouring inhabitants build their dwellings at a distance from the river—either on the acclivities, or

midway up the mountains, changing the sunny sides of the hills into chestnut groves or vineyards. Nevertheless, the richest farms are on the high road to the Sempione, being thus in more direct communication with the merchandize which is carried to or from Switzerland, France, Lombardy and Piedmont. The valley called Ossola, separated from the Lago Maggiore by Monte Orfano, which like an isolated giant guards the entrance, terminates in the small but elegant city of Domo. This is situate in a concave platform, about three miles in diameter, surrounded by very high and steep mountains, with peaks covered with perennial snow. The different sinuosities and vallies of this range of mountains have populous villages, of which the principal named Anzasca, Antrona, Vigizzo, Antigorio, and Divedro, diverge, like so many rays, from the head place of that district, called Domodossola.

LVIII. Strangers usually make some stay on their arrival at Domodossola, either before or after crossing the Alps. During the interval, those who wish to indulge their curiosity, are usually guided to the Calvario. This sanctuary stands on an isolated hill of a cone-like shape, towards the western part of the city, and the lateral parts are covered with pines, oaks, and other forest trees. Here and there may be seen little meads and vine trellises—while one side of it is as steep and perpendicular as the Tarpean rock. On its summit are situate a church and a house, originally destined for those priests and laymen, who wished to go through a course of spiritual exercises in this devout solitude. Subsequently, by Cardinal Morozzo, bishop of Novara, in whose diocese Monte Calvario is situate, the buildings were conceded to the Abate Rosmini, as a retreat for himself, and first companions, while laying the founda-

tions of the Institute of Charity. At this place, Gentili arrived from Rome, on the 31st August, 1831.

CHAPTER II.

HE TAKES CHARGE OF THE NOVICIATE—HOW HE FILLED THE DUTIES OF THAT OFFICE—HIS INTERIOR VIRTUES.

LIX. It was no small disappointment to Gentili to arrive at Monte Calvario during the absence of his spiritual father and friend, Rosmini, who had shortly before been invited by the Prince bishop of Trent, to establish a house of the new Institute in that city. On his arrival, however, Gentili found a small community, composed of two priests (one of whom was vice-rector), one deacon, two students, and two lay brothers, besides two clerks, sent by the bishop of the diocese for instruction in Divinity. Soon after, the absent superior sent orders for Gentili to undertake the charge of master of novices, and recommended him, by constant vigilance, industry, and zeal, gradually to introduce among the brethren, an exact observance of all their rules.

LX. To be called a master, where he came to be a disciple, surprised Gentili, at first, not a little; and his letters, at this time, to his superior, are full of humble complaints and pious objections on the subject: but afterwards comforted by faith in obedience, which is faith in God's will, wherein we can do all things, he submitted to the painful yoke, and thought of nothing else but how to fulfil his duty in the best possible way. For this purpose he deemed it necessary to

make a better arrangement of whatever related to the material department in the household, well knowing the influence which exterior neatness and propriety have upon internal order: wherefore, he obtained leave from the superior to provide furniture, linen, and other articles, whereby he was enabled to introduce into the dining room, and bed chambers, a better system of cleanliness. After this, he commenced preparations for the perfect life in community, by devoting several days to a spiritual retreat, prior to the Christmas festival, 1831. The result of these spiritual exercises was so satisfactory, that he addressed to Father Rosmini, at Trent, the following account:

"Dal Calvario, January 3, 1832.

LXI. "Thanks to God and His blessed Mother for the favours which I every day receive—let the just in heaven, on earth, and all creatures, bless and praise them with me, for the Almighty's infinite condescension in making use of an instrument such as I am, more despicable than Samson's weapon—the jawbone of an ass, or, to speak more truly—to snatch me like a 'brand from the burning,' for the purpose of moving, by His grace, the hearts of others. Thus, during the retreat preparatory to the Christmas festival, I have been so edified by all, and have experienced so much consolation, that, in the whole course of my life, I do not remember to have passed that festive season more joyfully. Our time was distributed, during the retreat, in the following manner: Almost immediately after rising in the morning at the usual hour, we commenced the first meditation. This was followed by prayers and mass in the Church; thence we went together to the choir for the recitation of the canonical hours; subsequently, one hour was devoted to private spiritual

reading of books, which I had previously provided—a second meditation was preached—then followed the examination of conscience, and dinner. To this meal succeeded two hours of repose and silence, after which successively followed spiritual reading—vespers, and complin—private meditation—visit to the Holy Sacrament—matins; the fourth meditation, the rosary—the subject for next day's consideration; supper, silence, visit to the Blessed Sacrament—examination of conscience, benediction and rest. The refectory, in which I preached, had been converted into an impressive looking chapel, and a raised platform answered the purpose of a pulpit. In order not to disturb these arrangements, during meals, the brethren took their food, some in a corner, some seated on the ground with a chair for a table. The scene was truly edifying, because every thing was done in an orderly, penitential manner. All abstained from wine, and were very sparing of food. Besides, there was a rivalry in humiliation: many publicly craved pardon for their failings and sins—others prostrated themselves at the feet of their superior and companions, imploring forgiveness, penance, and advice. This devotional fervour was not evanescent, but lasting."

LXII. In order to maintain and increase this fervour in the novices, their good master took the greatest care to make regularity, silence, poverty, mortification, charity, and piety, reign in the house. He vigilantly admonished, rebuked, and punished, but always with prudence and suavity, persuaded that virtue is never more constant than when it springs spontaneously from a conviction of the mind, the result of knowledge and prayer. He sedulously held a conference with the novices, at least, once a week. In these meetings some mystery of our Redeemer's life, or, a rule of the Institute, was

discussed; and he invited his companions in turn to give their opinions after reflecting on the subject. He used also to take each one apart, and affectionately induce him to open his mind candidly relative to his faults, temptations, and victories—the lights and special graces received from God—and then, like an expert physician, and faithful counsellor, he would suggest appropriate remedies, furnish them with proper books, determine the points for reflection, and prescribe the self-denials adapted to each one's circumstances. But, above all, he warmly inculcated devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary, towards whom, he himself was remarkably devout. To provide himself abundantly with that holy knowledge, which it was his office to impart to others, he sought, with avidity, to procure it from scriptural sources, and the lives of the saints: among the latter he preferred those of St. Teresa and St. Ignatius. The works of the former he often read; and the biography of the penitent of Manresa, by Bartoli, he profoundly studied, especially a portion of the third book, which treats of the admirable method of that servant of God in the heavenward direction of souls.

LXIII. Moreover, he was convinced that, although enlightened instructions are useful, it was the privilege of example to triumphantly persuade the mind. Wherefore Gentili's purpose before all, with the aid of divine grace, was to render himself a mirror and model of every virtue to his fellow novices. Regarding his exterior mortifications, I find in certain memoirs worthy of credit, that on his first arrival, he gave himself up to such an austere mode of living, as apparently to exceed the bounds of a just moderation. Besides strictly keeping the fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church, it may be said that he observed rigorously a continual Lent. His breakfast commonly consisted of

a piece of dry bread—his dinner of bread, soup, and boiled herbs or fruit—and his supper of bread and soup. From flesh meat and wine, he abstained, even when most laboriously employed in teaching or preaching. At most, occasionally, he would mingle a few drops of wine with water, for the purpose of rendering the latter less palatable, as he himself acknowledged to a confidential person. This is the more credible, as it was his custom to sprinkle bitter powders over his food, in order to deprive it of all pleasing taste, without making it unwholesome to the stomach. This mode of taking nutriment he used in his travels, or when invited out to dine, but without attracting notice: for refraining from meat, wine, and sweet pastry, he apologised by saying, that experience had proved them to be obnoxious to his health. He was ingenious in penitentially afflicting his body: for example, three times a week, from early morn till noon, he used to tie a prickly wire chain round his loins. Three times a week, also, during the recital of certain Psalms, he severely disciplined himself unto blood. He was sparing of repose, as he usually gave only four or five hours to sleep, often it was limited to two or three hours, and sometimes he watched the whole night long. This was not compensated by a nap during the day, according to the afternoon custom of Italy: this indulgence he also renounced from a love of mortification. This method of life, which he commenced at Calvary Mount, it appears, he ever after persevered in.

LXIV. With exterior, he combined interior mortification, the very life and soul of the former. During his religious retreat in Rome, while seeking to learn the will of God concerning his state in life, and meditating upon the mystery of the Incarnation, he was illumined, and heard in his heart a voice which told him

to lay the foundation of a perfect life by a total annihilation of self. The sacred solitude of Monte Calvario was the place, where he began the work. At first, these pious sentiments had not sunk very deeply into his heart; but in the novitiate, he soon saw that these inspirations were to be reduced to practice. And truly his new state of life had abruptly deprived him of all those connections and occupations without which poor human nature seems unable to exist. To be transported from Rome's sunny clime to the snow-clad Alps, and from the serene and smiling land of the south to a bleak and stormy region of the North of Italy—to leave parents, brothers, and sisters, numerous friends, and relations, and schoolfellows, for the company of a few unknown individuals—to exchange the brilliant society of the world's metropolis for the silence and retirement of Calvary,—the external pomp and magnificence of Church ceremonies in the Holy City, for the poor and meagre rites of a squalid Chapel—and instead of the sonorous and majestic language spoken by the polished citizens of Romagna, to listen to the semi-barbarous dialect of uncouth peasants. Hence, in the pulpit and in the confessional, his eloquence was often painful to himself, and but little relished, or understood by his rude audience. In fine, his philosophical and theological studies, which he had previously so much leisure in Rome to cultivate, were now hindered by minute, and almost unceasing avocations. Certainly all these circumstances together must have appeared to Gentili as an utter annihilation of self; and also to human infirmity harsh and unbearable, thus to renounce so many dear objects, and finally to become, as it were, a child. These sacrifices, however, are required by a Divine Master, from those who sincerely wish to become his disciples. Gentili did not seek to hide his

weakness in this respect, and acknowledged that sometimes reflecting on his present condition and humiliation, his grief was so great as to cause him to shed tears. But he said, (writing to his Superior,) "God, who made me pass through this ordeal, and for two or three days kept me immoveably fixed in thought, has deigned to recal to my mind what I had meditated upon at Rome during a spiritual retreat, relative to self-annihilation, and to give me very great light on the subject. Hence I comprehend the precious grace of self-denial. I experience a joy heretofore unknown to my heart, which excites me to desire this abnegation may increase so as to destroy all my self-love, whereof there still remains an immeasurable abyss. If it be God's will, let me die here, despised by all, as a useless, unprofitable servant. Blessed be the moment, in which I heard of the Institute of Charity! Blessed be the moment in which I joined the order! Blessed be the moment that I arrived here, and the time I have since remained! For, notwithstanding the spiritual desolation, and the trials of every sort which frequently assail me, and a certain spirit, which I believe to be diabolical, that tempts me to restlessness and spite—that urges me sometimes to detest all, and to curse all—the most holy things not excepting; nevertheless, in the citadel of my soul, I enjoy a species of paradise, living in a profound peace, which leaves me nothing else to desire, but more and more to love God, my only, true, and continual, occupation. O, that I could, once for all, correspond with the graces imparted to me by the Lord!"

LXV. Gentili aided his interior humiliation, by acts of exterior abjection, being convinced that, like the commerce between soul and body, they influence each other; and that man is often deluded in thinking that his natural pride is overcome solely by internal disap-

probation, when, perhaps, it could not endure the slightest outward rebuke. Wherefore, although he knew that true humility resides in the spirit, and that external humiliations, if arbitrary, must be practised with great prudence and moderation, in order to avoid excessive and strange singularities ; withal, he deemed it edifying to abase himself sometimes in the sight of men. As soon as he was made master of novices, I know that he called them all before him, and that humbly, plaintively, and almost weeping, he acknowledged his unfitness for the weighty office it was his duty to fulfil towards those, whose disciple he ought to be. Withal, since it was God's will, he begged for His sake that they would accept him ; and at the same time, he requested, they would not bestow the honorary title of Father, or Master, but treat him on a footing of equality, as a brother or a friend. Then resorting to his authority, he strictly commanded them all, whether laics or ecclesiastics, to freely admonish him of any fault, great or small, they might observe in him. At the liberty wherewith one of the novices scrupulously and unmercifully obeyed this order, he rejoiced as much as he grieved at the reserve of the others, owing to respect, perhaps, or some other cause. On which account, he stimulated them again to perform this duty. Although he was one of the superiors, he did not, when free from more important affairs, exonerate himself from the lowest employments in the house,—such as sweeping the floor, serving at table, and washing the dishes, &c. When it happened, that his immediate superior gave him for some defect, a humiliating penance, he was delighted, and seemed to triumph within himself. This occurred twice: on one occasion, an order came from the Superior, who was at Trent, for Gentili to dine three days kneeling in the refectory, having suspended from his neck a pla-

card, inscribed with his fault, in large characters. I was also told by a credible witness, that, in order thoroughly to overcome himself, he sometimes went alone on market-day, to the public square, where the concourse of people was the greatest, to buy brooms, and chamber-pots; and after seriously bargaining and paying for these elegant utensils, he would return home with them under his arms! Though the humble priest was laughed at by some spectators, there were others who looked upon him as a saint. I learn also from his letters written about that time, that he solicited his superiors to allow him to go through the neighbouring towns and villages with a sack over his shoulder, to gather bread and other alms for the sick and imprisoned poor: he also asked leave to visit a certain sanctuary, on foot, as a mendicant. But, these, his praiseworthy wishes, for prudent motives, were not acceded to by his Superior.

CHAPTER III.

SKETCHES OF HIS VIRTUES IN THE NOVITIATE, CONTINUED.

LXVI. Besides the before-mentioned and other virtues, Gentili was an example of tender piety in the eyes of his brother novices. Rarely did he fail to be present at the usual exercises of mental or vocal prayer, prescribed by the rules or customs. He carried his devotion almost to an excess, passing many hours, and sometimes the whole night before the Holy Sacrament, and there meditating on the infinite greatness

and goodness, and love of God, he would pour out his heart in ardent supplications and tender affections. These vigils, instead of proving an inconvenience, were considered, by him, as privileges, saying, that he derived therefrom comfort and strength in all other things. On which account, he deemed it well to solicit his superior not to give him prayer as a penance when deserving reproof, because, instead of making him suffer, it was a source of joy ; for the Lord being so bountiful in consolation, the greatest happiness he could experience upon this earth, was to be engaged in devout converse with Heaven. This was clearly manifest in the celebration of the divine sacrifice of the Mass, in which sacred function, it must for truth's sake be said, he was excessively prolix, occasionally employing more than one hour, not from a motive of scrupulosity, but through an overflow of devout sentiments and tender affections ; so that he was obliged at times to pause, and abandon himself into the hands of Providence. Nor could he always conceal from the bystanders his pious fervour, which at times in a flood of tears, or in half-stifled sighs, betrayed the internal commotion of the priest of God. A person connected with him by the ties of holy friendship, narrated to me that assisting one day at his Mass in the chapel of the holy sepulchre, she was moved to compunction at sight of the abundant tears, which he shed while holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hands. Afterwards, when she approached the tribunal of penance to make her confession to him, he still continued to weep, and for some space of time, he could utter no other words than these : "If you did but know—if you did but know." Then, like a Seraph, he spoke of Jesus in the Eucharist, and of His love towards mankind, with such ardent expressions as to excite in her soul a long-

ing desire for this bread of eternal life. The same person also informed me that Father Gentili, on Christmas day, owing to his prolixity, was sent to say his three Masses in the chapel of the sepulchre, and that he afterwards facetiously remarked that, with the effigy of a dead Christ before him, he had to represent to himself the new-born Jesus in His cradle. However he added, it did not make much difference.

LXVII. Of all his virtues, however, obedience was the chief : this has ever deservedly been esteemed by the saints as the touchstone of perfection. When Gentili made known to his superiors, his prayers and mortifications, he always concluded by saying, that through the Divine mercy, he was willing and ready to give up any of them at the call of obedience, and that if required to do so, he would take ten hours of rest instead of three or four—and to partake of ten dishes in lieu of one. He added, however, that it would be more mortifying to him than any austerity ; being certain that, he would then draw more profit from obedience, than from long prayers and penitential exercises. Continual were his solicitations to the superior, to circumscribe his activity within the limits of precise orders, for fear he should be wanting in the exact observance of monastic obedience. It happened, that the absent superior wishing to have an interview with him relative to some affairs of the institute, wrote for him to come to Trent. Having some important work of charity in hand, Father Gentili deemed it incumbent on him to humbly represent to his superior, the motives which prevented his journey at that moment. The superior, who was well acquainted with the virtue of his subordinate, seized the opportunity of giving him a lesson, which he was not likely to forget ; and which was calculated to hinder him, in future, from contra-

dicting, for apparent reasons, the express will of God's vicegerent. A reproof was conveyed in the few lines that follow :

"VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"From you, I expected more generosity and simple obedience. Stay at home, if you like : with such dispositions, it would be useless to travel hither. In the mean time, I will beg of God, to give you more detachment and greater indifference.

"Yours, most affectionately in Christ,

"ROSMINI."

"Trent, 28th October, 1833.

LXVIII. God alone knows the pain which this blow gave to Gentili, who loved his superior not less than obedience : however, I here quote an extract from his immediate answer : "Your letter, dated October the 28th, has just arrived. I cannot conceal from you that each of the few words it contains, has acted like a sharp sword, piercing me to the quick : Ah ! why did you not say, confide in my judgment, and come (I would have set out immediately), instead of telling me to stop at home if I liked ? I like to do nothing but the will of God ; I did not come to this place to follow my own, but your judgment, which I deem to be that of God in my regard ; if I make any objection when you consider it of no weight, give me a positive order, and that will ensure my compliance. For Charity's sake, then, write soon, and free me from the tormenting remorse of having, I fear, resisted God's most Holy will—impeded the prompt advancement of His glory, and the good of souls—and given displeasure to you, from whom, I have received so many benefits. Hence, before God and you,

I accuse myself as guilty of these faults, caused, perhaps, by my disobedience ; and I beg of you a very severe penance, in order that I may expiate my error, and amend for the future. But, quickly send for me, and dispose of me as you please. Intercede for me with God, that satan and self-love may not beguile my imagination, and induce me to rebel against His most holy will. With eyes bathed in tears, I conclude this letter, exclaiming, ‘ *Ab homine iniquo et doloso evue me !—contere brachium peccatoris et maligni.*’ ” Well satisfied with these humble sentiments, his superior wrote a consoling reply, exhorting him to perfect docility, “without which,” he said, “we cannot die to ourselves—and without being dead to ourselves, we may not live with Christ.”

CHAPTER IV.

GENTILI PRACTISES VARIOUS WORKS OF CHARITY—
TEACHES PHILOSOPHY—AND DISCHARGES THE DUTIES OF
PREACHER AND CONFESSOR.

LXIX. Father Gentili no sooner became acquainted with, than he esteemed and strongly adhered to that grand principle, which enjoins a christian, whatever may be his state in life, to attend in the first place, to his own moral perfection and salvation ; and not to undertake any external work, unless called thereto by Divine Providence, whose vocation is not to be presumptuously anticipated, but rather seconded with humility.

This cautious principle, however, did not arrest Gentili's ecclesiastical toils for the glory of God, and the service of his neighbours, any more than an embankment hinders the regular course of a stately stream. At the proper time, we shall see how the union of the contemplative, with the publicly active life, instead of diminishing, wonderfully increased his zealous spirit as an apostolical labourer. Even in the solitude of Monte Calvario, it was providentially designed that he should do something for the benefit of others' souls. Indeed, here, his gradually accumulating toils were a prelude to those of far greater weight he was to assume in another place. In the meantime, without dwelling upon his engagements as Master of novices, I will proceed briefly to narrate other occupations, which were added to this responsible office.

LXX. Shortly after his arrival at Calvary Mount, he was commissioned to give lessons in Philosophy to the student novices and to the clerical boarders. For this end, he undertook to explain the "New Essay on the Origin of Ideas." His mode of teaching was not pedantic, but placing this or that question in its most lucid point of view, proving the case with solid reasons, he endeavoured to excite an interest in his hearers. Leaving to the disputants a discreet freedom, he occasionally interfered to solve difficulties, and to prevent the warmth of controversy from transporting them beyond the bounds of propriety, or the matter in debate. Great was his satisfaction at their earnestness and emulation in these studies, which he deemed of the highest importance and utility at the present era. To enhance their practical advantages, he often elevated the minds of his scholars from philosophical to theological enquiries, showing the intimate and vital relation that exists between the two. He led them to the con-

viction that sound philosophy is not hostile, as some pretend, but a powerful auxiliary to Catholic Divinity. As Rosmini at that time had published scarcely more than the "*Nuovo Saggio*" of the great number of his works which have since seen the light, Gentili not seldom made known his wish to be near him for some time, in order, by his assistance, to penetrate more deeply his philosophical system; but circumstances preventing the accomplishment of this desire, he sought for compensation in epistolary correspondence.

LXXI. Besides his little school of philosophy, Gentili had a fine field for the employment of his zeal in preaching the word of God, and hearing sacramental confessions. For no sooner did the population in the neighbourhood know that the religious community at Calvary Mount were willing to afford spiritual aid to those who required it, than many came from all parts, on ferial as well as festal days, rejoicing to see their venerable sanctuary returning once more to its pristine splendour, and to be able themselves to practise in that devout retirement, their former works of christian piety. On which account, the members of the Institute of Charity deemed it proper to introduce regular services on Sundays and festivals: viz. an appropriate distribution of the masses for public convenience; a conventual mass, either said or sung, at a fixed hour; a discourse after reading the gospel, and in the end, a solemn benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, with musical accompaniment of the Litanies and usual hymns. This order was to take place in the morning before the parochial service in the town. In the afternoon, hymns and prayers were to be sung—the people divided into sections—the boys and girls separated from the adults—and a master appointed to each class to explain the catechism according to their capacity, and

the whole was concluded as it began, with prayer and devout canticles. Confessionals also were placed at different parts of the Church, and several confessors were in attendance, or within call, at any time when required. Besides the ordinary services, extraordinary functions were performed at intervals, such as triduos, novenas, and others hereafter to be mentioned.

LXXII. Besides the aforesaid offices, to Father Gentili was assigned that of preacher in the forenoon, and that of catechist, in the afternoon, to the children or adults, as also to hear confessions either of the men or of the women according to exigencies. These offices were doubly burthensome, for a reason before alluded to, viz., the great difference between his own Roman accent, and the semibarbarous dialect of the people here: the continual demand of all these clients left him but little leisure to attend to his other duties as novice master. Indeed, the certainty of finding him always at home, his insinuating and gentle manners, his spontaneous eloquence, his mortified and imposing aspect, and, above all, a divine spirit which animated him in the sacred ministry, attracted to him such a number of penitents, that, in order not to disappoint them, he was obliged, excepting meal-time, to remain the whole morning, or the entire day, in the tribunal of penance, and to defer his other affairs till night. Although this excessive concourse only occurred on Saturdays and festivals, yet, few were the days, in which he had not some hours to give to this spiritual work of mercy, requested, not only by vulgar people, but also by respectable persons of both sexes, among whom, it was edifying to see, many government officials. Neither did he perform this solemn office in a hurried off-hand manner; for I learn from various memoirs that, he attended to it with all the considerateness, dignity, and

patience, it so well deserves. He prepared for it by penance and prayer; and he afterwards did the same to procure the conversion of sinners—the perseverance of the good—and the perfection of the virtuous. All were charitably received, and instructed according to their particular requirements. If a difficult case needed mature reflection, he was not ashamed to avow this necessity to his penitents—to put off the decision, and ask for time to take counsel. When he perceived that excessive timidity, or natural bashfulness, made any one reserved in laying open his conscience, he would encourage the individual by manifesting the weaknesses and faults of his own past life, adding how the Lord had condescended to bring about his own conversion. One of his penitents writes to the following effect: “When I made my general confession to Father Gentili, to encourage me to declare my faults with a holy confidence, he related to me some failings of his past life, calling himself a great sinner, although his faults were the peccadilloes of an innocent mind. The most weighty were his having studied the English language, and procured a title of nobility, in order to obtain admission into the most distinguished circles. Afterwards, he added: but these follies procured me but little enjoyment—for the Lord, in the midst of pomp and worldly greatness, gave me an intimate sense that all was vanity, that my heart was capable of higher aspirations, and that I was egregiously deceived, if I supposed any true happiness could be found in such foppery. Hence, I used to return from conversation with a sad and heavy heart, and pensively retire to my chamber. At length, God was pleased to bring about a change in my desires, and I resolved to abandon the world.” In fact, he had a particular talent for guiding souls to the Lord, and it

was generally acknowledged, that, in the exercise of the sacred ministry, he possessed a divine unction which rendered irresistible his appeals to the heart. Not content with attracting sinners to repentance, and confirming the good in God's grace, his greatest achievement in combatting satan, was to succeed in drawing some elect soul to a perfect life in the religious state. In these his efforts, he was often consoled by the divine favour. One of these trophies subsequently related with tender gratitude, that when she at first demurred for some time to her heavenly vocation, Father Gentili used to say to her: "Well, my daughter, you may resist, but in the end I shall be victorious; I will offer up prayers, and discipline myself until I obtain the object of my supplication." When later she took the veil, smiling with holy joy, he said: "Oh, you cost me a great deal, but let us thank the Lord that grace has been granted." To secure these glorious conquests, besides his prayers and austerities, he resorted to epistolary correspondence; and some of his letters, which have been kindly communicated to me, are full of that charitable wisdom, which peculiarly appertains to true servants of God. The following case may serve as a specimen:

LXXII. Encouraged by his counsels, after becoming a novice in a certain monastery, a former penitent wrote to acquaint him with the disturbed state of her mind at the thought of having abandoned her dear parents, and at the same time to solicit his advice and consolation. In his immediate answer, among other things, he stated, that to him, her affection to her parents did not seem blameworthy; but, he continued, I beg of you to remember the saying of Jesus Christ: "He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me;" to bear also in mind, that a true love towards parents

does not consist in being always at home with them, but much more in praying for their salvation: (this is never done so cordially as when one removes from them and the world in obedience to the voice of God;) or in leaving them a short time on earth, with the hope of being re-united with them eternally in heaven. Place before your eyes the example of the saints, and therefrom you will derive courage for any sacrifice. View the mother of the Machabees, and a Saint Felicitas, both of them intrepid spectators of their seven children led to martyrdom, and encouraging them by words and signs to endure any torment rather than be disloyal to God! Behold a St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and a St. Jane Frances de Chantal! The latter did not hesitate to pass over the body of her son, who barred her passage to the cloister! But why do I adduce far-fetched examples? Look around, and you will see many holy maidens who loved their parents and relations perhaps more tenderly than you do, and yet for God's sake, they left them in places far more remote than yours; and probably, they were more beloved, caressed, and indulged in their wishes by their parents than you have been! Ah! if the Lord has freed you from the slavery of Egypt, do not act like the Hebrews, who, disgusted with heavenly manna, reclaimed the vile food of their former servitude, and wished for their old chains because the journey was rather long to the promised land. The sadness you now experience will soon end. It will be succeeded by a most peaceful calm, and greater consolation than you anticipate; and the longer His delay the sweeter will be the visit of the Lord. Then shall your mind be illumined by a great and shining light, then shall you see the certainty of your vocation, then shall you feel a confidence in Superiors and Directors, and all things will wear a different

aspect. Take courage, therefore, and rejoice in the Lord. This is essential, because, if Satan can throw us into dejection, then all assumes a dismal appearance: so it happened to the greatest saints, who, in desolation of mind, were tempted to believe, that all their preceding graces and celestial favours had been diabolical illusions—that God had abandoned them—and that they had become objects of hatred instead of love: these and similar gloomy ideas are permitted by His Divine Majesty to humiliate and purify the souls of His elect, in order to raise them to the highest degree of virtue and contemplation. Take courage, then, in the midst of your mental troubles, holding for certain that they are the harbingers of the greatest consolations, and confide unreservedly in the Divine Goodness, with humility profound. Recommend yourself to most holy Mary, and say often, “*Causa nostræ lætitiæ, ora pro nobis.*” Bear in mind that you had the grace, like her, to be presented in the temple on the Presentation festival. It was in the temple, that Mary knew the state to which God called her;—so will you doubtless, learn it, and also how to banish sorrow without ceasing to pray.

LXXIII. Later, writing to the same religious novice from England, he said: “Yesterday was the festival of the Archangel St. Michael, under whose protection Divine Providence has placed us, and I hope He has obtained for you abundant grace to persevere in the state prepared for you by the Lord’s mercy, as an escape not only from hell, but also from purgatory, if you know how to correspond faithfully with your vocation. About a year has elapsed since you put on the sacred habit, which I trust you will exchange for a garment of incomparable and everlasting beauty in Paradise. Would you now turn your back on Jesus Christ? What, think

you, is not the honour of being the spouse of the King of Glory worth the pain of suffering all the crosses, contradictions, and martyrdoms of this world? Are not a few years of a mild, voluntary, and honourable seclusion well spent in delivering yourself from everlasting fire, and in earning a blessed and eternal liberty among the children of God in heaven? Ah, my dear sister! call to mind the moments when Jesus Christ draws near to the heart, and from the sample of happiness then enjoyed, you may infer the degree of felicity reserved, until the time when you shall see His comeliness without a veil, and be admitted to the kiss of eternal peace! Hence, encourage yourself to be, like Him, fastened to the cross until death. For my sake, I know that He descended from heaven to earth—that He passed a life of continual suffering—and that He expired in a sea of ignominy and grief! This knowledge is enough to soothe and alleviate every sorrow. Here I am among heretics: alas! what a humiliation it is for a son of Holy Church to behold his mother here in the most deplorable slavery! What errors, vices, miseries, and folly prevail! Who will give tears sufficient to my eyes to weep over such a desolate state of things? God's judgments are inscrutable; but, it appears a divine malediction has fallen upon this land. It is a chaos, where 'nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.' Even nature seems to concur in reducing it to this condition; for the country, generally speaking, presents nothing to view but hay and oak trees. The atmosphere is almost always cloudy, and whenever it shews itself serene, it appears with a leaden coloured veil, which weighs down one's spirits. O where are those evenings and days of another clime—when at morn, or at noontide, I could raise my eyes towards the sun's brilliant beams, and at night, to the

starry vault of Italy's azure sky, and feel at the same time, my soul, of the world unmindful, wholly absorpt in God? Where, in fine, amid the warbling of nightingales, I used to raise my voice in psalms and canticles, in behalf of my own necessities, and the Church's wants, to the Creator's eternal throne? Here, on the contrary, a flock of garrulous crows continually stunning my ears, render my abode still more dismal. In conclusion, let me tell you that, whether I gaze at the heavens, or look down upon the earth, I have nothing left me but God. Withal, the Deity is far more than such a culprit as I deserve, considering that I have so ungratefully used the benefits He still unceasingly bestows."

CHAPTER V.

GENTILI'S SINGULAR ABILITY AND SUCCESS AS A DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, ESPECIALLY IN PRIVATE.

LXXIV. Another not less useful work of charity, kept Father Gentili continually occupied; and that was the direction of spiritual exercises for the clergy and laity, who, attracted by the devout solitude of Monte Calvario, and by the reputation of its religious occupants, spontaneously came for counsels relative to their choice of a state in life, or their soul's health. These devotional exercises were performed, not as is usual in communities, with the accompaniment of public lectures and sermons; but privately and individually, according to the plan of St. Ignatius, to the great benefit of those concerned. This system prescribes

that each one should receive, in his own chamber, at fixed hours, and by appointed persons, the corporal sustenance, and mental nourishment he requires. The latter is portioned out to him by the Director, with due regard to the circumstances of each one's peculiar requirements—and care is taken that every important matter under consideration shall be carefully digested, in order to produce not a transient, but a permanently good effect.

LXXV. The qualities required, and devoutly wished for in a spiritual Director, were possessed by scarcely any one that I ever knew, in so eminent a degree, as by Father Gentili. "The good Director," says Rosmini, in his work on the subject, "ought to be holy and wise." Both these qualifications were combined in Gentili: holiness was depicted in his countenance—in the modest majesty of his whole appearance,—in the austerity of his life, and in the gentle gravity of his manners, &c. But all these formed only the exterior bark, the interior substance consisted in distrust of his own strength, and in an unbounded confidence in God, while charitably undertaking the guidance of others. Consequently, he was not prodigal of counsels, or excessively forward in urging to any thing, however good it might be. He was desirous that thoughts and resolutions should spring spontaneously from the heart, with the aid of Divine grace, rather than from one's own industry. And he always rejoiced at such a result occurring without his interference. Withal, knowing that in His mercy, God ordinarily makes use of servants, however unprofitable, for the good of souls, he offered his assistance, with humility, affection, and zeal; and by means of secret prayers and penances, implored grace from the Almighty for his clients. His wisdom was manifest in the high esteem which he him-

self had formed of the spiritual exercises, and in the skill with which he employed them for his neighbour's advantage. He acquired a proficiency in this holy and useful art, by frequent and diligent practice, and first experienced the effects, both particular and general, on his own mind. He had also attentively studied two classical works on the subject, viz. St. Ignatius's "Spiritual Exercises," and the "Directory," so discreetly compiled by order of the fifth general congregation of the Society of Jesus.

LXXVI. It ought not to surprise any one, if the praise of wisdom be awarded to a skilful master of this spiritual science, such as was Father Gentili; for if men give praise to those, who by genius and study, acquire the art of ably representing on canvass, or in marble, or bronze, human forms and passions—why should commendation be denied to the spiritual artist, who polishes and improves the nobler part of man, that is, the immortal mind; by enabling it to reflect the sublimely beautiful and perfect image of God himself? The works of the former terminate in a material substance, those of the latter refer to the spirit of a moral being. The former are subject to the destructive ravages of time,—while the duration of the latter is unlimited,—the former may fetch prices of gold and silver from their fond admirers on earth,—but the latter have been loved, redeemed, and purchased by the precious blood of the Lord of the universe; the former are collected to adorn the palaces of earthly monarchs,—the latter are exalted to the heavenly empyreum, and surround the glorious throne of the King of Kings! With regard to their relative difficulties, the painter and sculptor have, doubtless, an arduous task—to invent, and then to execute their noble conceptions. It is necessary for them to subdue

inanimate materials, which are almost impervious to the mind's lofty aspirations. They are also obliged to handle with ability the multifarious implements of their profession: it is necessary for them to excavate and to lay hold of human nature, as it were, in its harmonious relationship between spirit and matter, and to exhibit it on a material surface, so that from what is visible, the invisible may be inferred. But far more difficult than all is the enterprise of him, who assumes to repair a divine likeness in the soul; for he often has to work upon a substance, which offers to the operator not only a passive, but also an active resistance against its own amelioration—which hides its disorders and defects—which deceives itself and others—which, when unmasked, is ingenious in finding obstacles to a surrender of itself to what is true, just, and perfect—and which, with the opposition of natural infirmity and malice, not seldom combines an insidious, or open hostility of passion and satanic power. It is here the skill and prudence of the Director are called for, after studying well the moral state of the penitent—following attentively his progressive or retrograde steps in the way of the Lord—calculating the number and quality of his talents in the order of nature and grace, applying judiciously the proper arguments, so as to insist upon one truth more than another—exciting this affection—suggesting that prayer, and loosening or drawing in the reins of bodily mortification—warning and guarding against the snares and assaults of the enemy—in short, guiding him by the hand through trials of darkness, affliction, perplexity, presumption, and fear, to a refuge of security and peace. This assiduous and admirable method of proceeding according to the varied character of penitents, is accurately detailed in the beforementioned work on a “spiritual

retreat." Those rules form a kind of Arsenal, whence an expert commander draws resources to ensure his victory over the foe; but they would be of little or no use to an irresolute or inexperienced leader.

LXXVII. One of these invaluable and clever guides was Father Gentili, in my opinion. This may be partly certified by the good effects perceptible during the short time of his devoting himself to this work of charity at the Holy Mount. The first persons who came to be directed by him, were so satisfied, that on their return home, they sought to infuse enthusiasm into their colleagues and others, and to induce them also to perform a retreat in the same place, assuring them they would have no cause for regret. The second comers adopted similar views ; and thus there was a continued concourse of pious devotees to this sacred retirement. Among those who profited by Father Gentili's charitable zeal, were some excellent ecclesiastics, who either embraced a life of perfection in the Institute of Charity, and other religious societies, or cherished in their hearts the secret wish of so doing, as soon as they were permitted by external circumstances.

CHAPTER VI.

GENTILI DIRECTS THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES IN VARIOUS SEMINARIES AND CONVENTS OF THE DIOCESE OF NOVARA—PREACHES A LENTEN COURSE OF SERMONS AT DOMODOSSOLA—INTRODUCES THE DEVOTION IN HONOUR OF CHRIST'S THREE HOURS' AGONY ON CALVARY—IMPROVES THE VIA CRUCIS—AND PREPARES TO RELIEVE CHOLERA PATIENTS.

LXXVIII. Owing to the reputation he had acquired in the diocese, the ecclesiastical authorities invited Father Gentili to conduct the usual retreats in the seminaries of Miasino, Varallo, Gozzano, Arona, &c. In the first-named place, he was twice commissioned by the Cardinal di Novara, to give the spiritual exercises, and to act as extraordinary confessor to the Ursuline Nuns of a monastery there, as several of their novices had been acquired by his charity and zeal. Concerning Father Gentili, one of these religious ladies wrote as follows: "It was our advantage to have him twice to preach the holy exercises amongst us, to the complete satisfaction and edification of the whole community, as he left behind him the true fragrance of holiness, and a reputation for saintly wisdom, which will indelibly remain in the memory of those who knew him. He was rigid towards himself while indulgent to others; he left those under his guidance to ask of their own accord for penances and mortifications, which he was very reserved in allowing. He held them, withal, in esteem, and made others appreciate them highly; so that, having to

impose a severe penance for a fault, he ordered the delinquent to deprive herself of all her usual corporal austerities for a month. With those souls, however, whom he knew the Lord had called to the path of penance, he was less difficult. This holy Father also knew how, by persuasive speech, to render suffering amiable and delightful for Jesus' sake. And when any obstacle was alleged to the denial of self-will, he would say in irresistible words: 'Courage, sister, it is nothing until you have resisted unto blood.' Finally, I conclude by saying, that in my opinion, this holy Father was like a St. Aloysius, in innocence,—a St. Francis Xavier, in zeal for the salvation of souls,—a St. Peter of Alcantara in austerity of life,—a St. Francis of Sales, in suavity of manners,—a St. Francis Borgia, in love towards the Blessed Sacrament,—a St. Ignatius, in perfect indifference—and a St. Francis of Assisi, in humility."

LXXIX. In a letter to his superior, Gentili mentions his labours here, from which it appears that, during ten days engaged in preaching, hearing confessions, exhorting, and other duties of his ministry, he had scarcely time for his meals, and the recitation of the divine office, which he finished at midnight, devoting at most, four or five hours to repose. It was to his nocturnal psalmody, on this occasion, accompanied by the nightingale's song, while beholding the majestic and azure canopy of the starry heavens that he alluded, when he wrote the before-mentioned letter from foggy England. On his journey to Miasino, it seems, he had only just half recovered from a previous sickness—and returning to Calvary in an uncovered carriage, although he was for half a day exposed to continual rain, nevertheless, he returned, by God's blessing, safe, sound, and completely restored to health. Hence he wrote the

following Christian and philosophical reflections on the subject: "The path by which God has led my steps for several months past, through spiritual and corporal infirmities, has to me been truly salubrious, since I now really begin to be convinced of my profound nothingness, and extreme helplessness. Therefore, may God be eternally blessed; may a blessing also be on my infirmities, desolations, and numberless relapses, since they have opened my eyes to the extent of my misery: if it pleases the Divine goodness to keep me on this road of affliction until death, I am content. But behold me now restored to my pristine state, and former health, with the advantage of having acquired greater indifference to what I have suffered for the love of Jesus Christ. If, hitherto, to prolong vigils in prayer was to me as a truly delightful refreshment, it has now become indifferent and even repugnant, either through spiritual sloth or disgust. But I find therein instead, a more solid exercise of faith, and patience. How beautiful art thou, O holy confidence in God!"

LXXX. Father Gentili's toils in announcing the divine word to Diocesan seminaries and convents, were concluded in 1833, by a Lenten course of sermons, preached three times a week in the principal church of Domodossola. It was not without inconvenience, and even danger, that he executed this office, owing to his weak constitution, and the inclement state of the weather, during which, the roads were often covered with ice and snow. As he left his mountain home in the morning, and came back to it in the evening, it happened that, once, on his return, he slipped, and fell over the brink of a very steep declivity to the imminent peril of his life, so much so, that, his priestly companion not being able to assist him in any other way, pronounced the sacramental absolution. Provi-

dentially, however, after rolling a short distance down the snow-clad precipice, his further descent was stopped by the stump of a tree; and unhurt he re-ascended, and continued his journey. This, perchance, was one of the two accidents, in which, as Gentili told a confidential person, the devil had tried to destroy him by dangerous falls, and from which, his "dear mamma, Mary," (to use his own expression,) had so wonderfully preserved him.

LXXXI. An ardent zeal for spiritually assisting his neighbours, and a most tender devotion towards the passion of our Divine Redeemer, enabled him, also, to find time to introduce on the sacred mount a new devotional practice, and to improve another already in use. The former, commonly called "*Le Tre ore di Agonia*," was instituted not long ago, to aid more sensibly the private devotion of Christians, in commemorating their Saviour's last agonising struggles of mind and body, until bowing down his head, He expired on the cross. For this purpose, the sacred function takes place on the anniversary of the divine tragedy, that is, on good Friday, usually from twelve to three o'clock, p.m. Cardinal Morrozio had already introduced into the cathedral city of Novara, this devotion, at which he personally assisted every year. But no place could be better adapted for so sorrowful a commemoration than the Calvary Mount, where all the accessories reminded the spectator of his Redeemer's passion. The church itself was dedicated to Christ, of whom a large and beautiful figure affixed to the cross was suspended over the altar. When it became known that, on Good Friday, 1832, the "three hours' agony" would be solemnized at Calvario, the crowd of people was so great, there were as many outside as in the Church, which was crammed to excess. The following year,

for greater public accommodation, the ceremony was performed in a spacious parish church of the city, and the method adopted was as follows: after a few prayers, recited or sung, Father Gentili, in his clerical gown and cap, ascended a platform on the gospel side of the altar, and commenced his exordium; after which, with affectionate earnestness, he developed the first words that Christ pronounced on the cross; viz.: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii.) Then, at the end of a brief discourse, some stanzas are generally sung with instrumental accompaniment, which admirably aid in exciting devout sentiments in the heart. To give the exhausted preacher time to recruit his strength, another clergyman reads aloud from some appropriate book. When the lecturer ceases, at a given signal, the preacher stands up and comments on Christ's words to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke xxxiii.)* Thus, alternately, hymns, lectures, and sermons, succeed each other during the three hours, which are concluded amid the sighs and tears of the audience, moved by the pathos of the subject and the speaker's eloquence, to tender piety and compunction, and which are the prelude, doubtless, to the sincere conversion of not a few repenting sinners.

LXXXII. Another devotional practice not introduced, but improved by Father Gentili, was the so-called "Via Crucis." From the time of the first foundation at Calvary, there existed a pious custom of

* The words are usually arranged in the following order:
 (1.) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
 (2.) "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (3.)
 "Woman, behold thy son—son, behold thy mother." (4.) "I thirst." (5.) "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"
 (6.) "It is consummated." (7.) "Father, into Thy hands, I commend my spirit."

visiting this Holy Mount, not only through curiosity, but also in imitation of the compassionate women, who followed our Saviour during His sorrowful journey to Golgotha. Hence originated the pious custom of representing, at intervals, in niches or chapels along the road, the principal scenes connected with the passion and death of a Man-God. This was the case with the inhabitants of Domodossola, when the Institute of Charity sought its first asylum at the Monte Calvario. From the commencement of Lent until the "finding of the Holy Cross," on Sundays and festivals, after the evening parochial service, the people, divided into ranks more or less numerous, of men, women, and children, would meet at the foot of calvary, and piously reciting prayers, ascend the acclivity, making a halt at every chapel or station, while one of their number read aloud the particular narrative connected with that portion of the Via Crucis.

LXXXIII. This mode of proceeding appeared to Father Gentili obnoxious to some objections, and he deemed it capable of amelioration, if performed under the superintendence of some zealous and experienced ecclesiastic. As he himself was well acquainted with the method in use at the Colosseum in Rome, he obtained leave from the authorities to regulate the procession in the following order. At the usual hour on festivals, from the house of the Institute, he came with a small band of religious, preceded by a cross bearer, to the foot of the mountain. Then heading the people there assembled, the clergy led the way in good order to the first station. Here Father Gentili, or a companion, read aloud an explanation of the mystery there represented. At the end of the lecture, a choir of well practised singers chanted hymns appropriate to the occasion; after which the people moved on, alternately

reciting prayers till they arrived at the third station. This mode of proceeding was repeated fourteen times, until they reached the summit; then entering the Church, they received a blessing with the sign of Redemption. The modesty of the religious—the devout harmony—and the fervid manner of the lecturer at the different stations, to which the Divine Lamb had been pleased to be dragged like a sheep to the slaughter for man's salvation, attracted a large multitude of all ranks, age, sex, and condition. This visible religious commotion was doubtless indicative of the edification and pious sentiments imparted to, as well as received by, all present.

LXXXIV. In the spring of the year 1832, after decimating many regions of Europe, the cholera-morbus extended itself to Italy, where it caused the greatest ravages. It is in similar circumstances, that an essential difference, between the mountebank philanthropy of worldlings, and the operative charity of Christ's modest disciples, becomes manifest. At the approach of one of these scourges of humanity, the former seem paralyzed with affright—and solely intent on their own safety, they abandon in terror their dearest relatives and friends; whereas the religious christian rises superior to danger, and encouraged by faith and charity, devotes his life and substance to the spiritual and corporal wants of his brethren, expecting no other reward in this world than to fall a victim to his compassionate benevolence. Profane philanthropists may unite in danger together for selfish and epicurean purposes, like those recorded in the Florentine Boccaccio's Decamerone. But evangelical charity alone can produce such constant, pure, and heroic acts of mercy, as are related by Manzoni, in his account of the Capuchin Father, Christopher, during the plague at Milan. (I

Promessi Sposi, § 31.) Yet strange to say, while an ungrateful world often applauds the vain boastings of philosophers, self-styled humane, it traduces and persecutes with its confiscations, malignity, and scorn the good religious of both sexes, who are ever the most unostentatious, intrepid, and generous benefactors of suffering humanity.

LXXXV. At the end of April in the beforementioned year, tidings arrived of the proximity of the dreaded disease to Domodossola; and in the not far distant Swiss city of Brigg, it had carried off in a few days, twenty-seven victims. This news alarmed the town council of the first-named place, and induced them to adopt precautionary measures. The municipal secretary, Signor Bianchi, was deputed to Calvary, to solicit its superiors (of whom Father Gentili was the only one at home), to assist the civic authorities in this perilous emergency. Besides the aid of the brethren of charity, they requested the loan of the convent of the Sisters of Providence, to serve as an hospital for cholera patients. Before giving a definite answer, Father Gentili wrote for instructions to his superior, Rosmini, then in Trent, and received a favourable reply, as may be seen from the following correspondence between them. After stating the case in his letter, the first of May, 1832, Gentili goes on to request an immediate answer, "because," he says, "we wish for it even more than they, seeing that God presents to us in our own house, a fine field for the exercise of spiritual and corporal charity towards our neighbour; we exult with a holy joy, and all with one voice, clerics and lay brothers, we solicit not merely permission, which will not, doubtless, be denied us, but the order of obedience to sacrifice our whole lives, not only in the care of the hospital, but also in affording help to the sick elsewhere, if required, in these critical

times. Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat. All in the house, as well as myself, feel so much courage and joy, that were it not for the detriment it might bring to our neighbours, we would wish not to be exempted from this fearful visitation. In the meantime, Satan, who sharpens so many tongues against us, has already caused a report to be spread, that, when the epidemic comes, we shall all take flight! But, by the grace of God, we shall see, whether our detractors be not the very first to take to their heels. Now, we have prayers and benedictions, and I hear that a penitential procession is coming to our church, where a triduo is to be performed: praise be to God, that the hearts of men are beginning to be moved, although not sufficiently, because sinners are still indifferent about the matter, and flatter themselves, either that the pestilence will not make its appearance, or allow them partly if not wholly to escape."

To this communication Rosmini answered as follows:

"Trent, 6th May, 1832.

"Without a moment's delay, I proceed to answer your enquiry. If compassion for those threatened by the impending malady has occasioned me pain, the unanimous desire manifested by my dearest brethren at Calvary, of risking their lives in the service of the infirm for the sake of Jesus Christ, has filled me with still greater joy and consolation. The love of Jesus now presents you with a fine opportunity of gaining a desirable crown, if you die in so charitable an office! O how consoling the words, you will one day hear: 'Infirmus eram, et visitastis me!' Certainly, than this, there can be no safer insurance for your eternal salvation. If I can, I will also assuredly come to lend you a helping hand, and take a share in your happy labours for Christ. With regard to the house tenanted by me,

I place it entirely at the disposal of the municipality for a public hospital. Indeed, I will make known as much to Signor Bianchi, in the letter, with which this is accompanied. However, let us combine prudence with zeal, as our Guide and Master recommends; that is, to take precautions both for soul and body: I say for the soul, because in public visitations of this kind, the soul is exposed to more dangers than usual, owing to greater freedom from restraint, and other causes. On which account, the greatest vigilance is incumbent on superiors. Take the subject into consideration, and let me know the result of your reflections, together with a provident plan for our brethren's conduct in the case of sickness. Pray unceasingly, and make known to all, with my salutations, the comfort I experience in their generous offering. We are here, also, all of the same mind, and we have already offered ourselves to the Bishop. I wish also that you would do the same: write to the Bishop an appropriate letter, in which you offer your services for the care of both bodies and souls of the sick (excepting the corporal care of females, which I absolutely exclude), in any shape, and in any part of the diocese, he may wish to employ you. Tell him, moreover, in your letter, that this is done spontaneously by each one of you, after mature counsel, with confidence in God, and with the consent and permission of your superior. Then let each one subscribe his name, beginning with the vice superior down to the lay brothers inclusively. So that all our brethren may be of one mind, in one holocaust, without any exception. Farewell."

LXXXVII But God, who doubtless accepted the liberal oblation of their hearts, did not will the exterior sacrifice, either at Trent or Domodossola, during that

year. To Gentili it was reserved to die a victim of charity, at a later period, in Ireland, as we shall relate in due course, when we treat of his apostolic labours in Great Britain. In the mean time, it appears that heaven afforded him a pledge of his future achievements, by the extraordinary reception of a noble young English Lady into the Catholic Church. This event, which happened at Domodossola, in the October, 1833, shall be narrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WONDERFUL CONVERSION OF A YOUNG ENGLISH LADY, FROM HERESY TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

LXXXVIII. Among England's ancient and illustrious houses is that of Trelawney, so denominated from a castle of the same name, appertaining to the family from time immemorial. At the time of which we are about to speak, the chief of this numerous and noble race, was the remarkable and nearly octogenarian, Sir Henry Trelawney, who, after having been a dignitary of the Anglican sect—was converted to the true faith, and received sacerdotal orders in the Catholic Church. Two of his daughters, Anna Lætitia, and Maria, also became Catholics. This consolation was somewhat alloyed, by seeing his eldest son, William, a member of parliament for the county of Cornwall, still a protestant. However, the good old baronet hoped that the Lord in His mercy, would one day conduct also his beloved son to the true fold, as the latter was not

adverse to the Catholic religion, and had co-operated in passing the emancipation act. His young daughters were also favourably inclined: one of these, named Lætitia, perhaps as a reward for zeal displayed in a good cause, was called by God from error to the orthodox belief of her ancestors.

LXXXIX. In the spring of the year, 1833, the before-mentioned Miss Lætitia accompanied her aunt to Italy, on a visit to her grandfather, Sir Henry, who had taken up his abode at Laveno, on the banks of the Lago Maggiore. The parents of Lætitia did not fear the danger of her becoming a proselyte, as she was cordially attached to anglicanism—and remarkably clever and acute: they therefore did not refuse their consent to her travelling abroad. Her talents and acquirements were indeed remarkable. Excellent in drawing, music, and similar accomplishments, she was also a proficient in the French, German, Italian, Latin, and Hebrew languages, besides being well versed in the most subtle disputes and sectarian controversies, which distract and lacerate the varied ranks of English society. In order to inform herself better of the tenets of opposing sects, she had attended the sermons of different dissenting ministers, and learnt the arguments used in support of their own opinions, while combating the doctrines of their adversaries. Yet all this while, she still adhered to the Church established by law. But, that all-wise and merciful Being, who sometimes makes apparently conflicting causes tend to the same effect, providentially ordained that this damsel's singular erudition and special knowledge of Latin and Hebrew, instead of confirming her in the pride of self-conceit, and in the fancied superiority of her private judgment, should conduce to her humbly bowing down proud reason in obedience to faith.

XC. On her arrival in Italy, Lætitia was naturally obliged as it were, in spite of herself, to breathe an atmosphere of Catholicism, and she viewed it in a different light from what it appeared to her in England. Living with a family of near and most dear relations, no longer protestants, but fervent Catholics,—that is to say, with her two aunts and aged Grandfather, she saw the Catholic religion credited, loved, and professed, not only within domestic walls, but also in villages, market towns, and capital cities—by peasants, tradesmen, merchants, public officers, kings and princes, by rich and poor, patricians and plebeians, the ignorant as well as the learned of an entire nation. She beheld this religion exercising a sway supreme over the most beautiful and renowned country in the world;—she gazed on its vast number of churches and basilicæ, dedicated to God and His saints, wherein it is difficult to know whether one ought to admire most the profusion of gold and silver, or the architectural elegance of the buildings, or the artistic value of the paintings and statues. The Catholic Church's solemn and magnificent worship affected and surprised her;—the splendid garniture of altars on festal days—the sumptuous apparel of the sacred ministers—the hierarchical arrangement of the clergy—the dignified ceremonial—the gravity of ecclesiastical music—the soul-absorbing sound of bells and organs—the processions of alternate joy, and penitential sorrow—all combined to make a profound impression on her heart—to diminish her prejudices—and to convince her that Catholicism is not that absurd and ridiculous system so often depicted by its enemies. Hence she suspected the latter to be either deceived or deceivers, and as they had calumniated Catholicity in matters which she had witnessed with her own eyes, so she deemed it not unlikely that they had made

false imputations in other respects. In the mean time, she felt a concealed yet ardent desire to act as she had done with the doctrines of dissenters, viz. to study and examine deeply the foundations of the Catholic Faith. Even when in England, in order to remove all doubts on the important subject of belonging to the true Church, she had in vain wished to be able to make a just comparison by consulting the works of the Fathers in the four first ages of Christianity—as these were held by her to be teachers of Christ's true doctrine. She wished, in fine, to ascertain whether what she had hitherto been taught by the ministers of her own creed, was correct or not, viz. the assertion that the dogmas in which Catholic priests differ from Anglican parsons, are inventions of the former, and were wholly unknown to primitive writers.

XCI. In September, 1833, whether designedly or accidentally, I know not, Lætitia removed with her aunts to Domodossola, near which place, they knew was the residence of Dr. Gentili, with whom they had had some relationship before in Rome. After the reciprocal exchange of visits prescribed by urbane usage, their conversation spontaneously turned on the topic of religion; and Lætitia thought in her own mind, that her sacerdotal friend, whose learning and piety she esteemed, was sent by the Almighty as an Angel from heaven to guide her steps in the arduous path she had chosen. Wherefore, one day, she ingenuously manifested her idea to Dr. Gentili, who strenuously exhorted her to prosecute her plan, and kindly rendered whatever assistance was in his power. After this, long and frequent conferences took place, during which the Catholic doctrines were categorically defined—controverted points debated—and Lætitia herself collated those passages of the Ancient Fathers, whose writings

contain any mention of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Seven Sacraments, Purgatory, Church authority, the Pope's supremacy, external worship, &c. For this purpose, were procured the works of St. Ignatius the martyr, St. Justin, St. Irenæus, St. Dionisius the Areopagite, (or the writings which are ascribed to him), Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Jerom, and St. Augustin, which she read, regarding the polemical subjects in question.

XCII. To avoid prolixity, I must omit a detailed account of all these controversial discussions; suffice it to say, that the first debate was about the truth and reality of the bloodless sacrifice of the altar, commonly called the Mass. Among the proofs adduced by Gentili for its existence and necessity, was the following remarkable text from the Prophet Malachy: "*Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus exercituum, et munus non suscipiam de manu vestra. Ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus: et in omni loco sacrificatur, et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda.*"

It was not difficult for the discerning and sincere catechumen to perceive in these prophetic words, the reprobation of carnal and figurative sacrifices among the Jews, and the vocation of the Gentiles to the Church, and the institution among the latter of a perennial and universal sacrifice, in which for the greater glory of God would be offered up a pure and immaculate victim. Indeed, Lætitia was so struck by the evidence of this prophecy regarding the Mass, that supposing some interpolation in the Latin text of the vulgate, she determined on examining the original Hebrew text; and when she found that it was an accurate version, she immediately acknowledged this true and fundamental article of our faith. After this triumph of grace, the

enquirer found the other obstacles less difficult to overcome, so that the intellect being once convinced, there only remained the difficulty of outwardly manifesting what she inwardly believed, by a solemn profession of her faith in Catholicism.

XCIII. But to this step, she was not so easily led, as might at first be imagined: nay, the infernal enemy, subdued in the intellectual combat, sought to repair his defeat by a powerful attack on the will. He represented to her fancy that to yield so soon to the arguments of an obscure priest, was to detract from the reputation she enjoyed in the world for superior talent and ability. He revived also, in her mind, the old prejudice against those, who desert the creed in which they were born, and that it was particularly unbecoming in a person of her elevated condition. Moreover, he magnified the probable grief and perhaps anger of her father, mother, sisters, and other protestant relatives, at the news which fame would soon convey to them, of her having abjured her native religion. These and similar perplexing temptations agitated her breast, so violently, that it was feared she would not have the moral courage to overcome them. But her spiritual auxiliary was not inactive during this terrible struggle with her invisible foe, and aided her much in her final achievement of victory. Besides demonstrating the unreasonableness of these apprehensions, Father Gentili calmed and fortified her mind, by all the means an ardent charity could suggest. He sought, especially, for aid from on High. To God he offered up his prayers and austerities, both day and night, for her soul's salvation. But, not so satisfied, he wrote to his friends in convents and elsewhere, to unite with him in this appeal to Heaven. He obtained leave from the ecclesiastical authority, during the Novena preceding the festival of the

Rosary, to have public prayers offered in the parochial Church, while the blessed Eucharist was exposed on the altar, and to implore the help of Her, whom the liturgy designates as "the destroyer of all heresies." A deaf ear was not turned to these supplications by God's holy Mother, for on the Rosary-festival, the catechumen rose superior to every impediment, and declared herself desirous of being received as speedily and as publicly as possible, into the bosom of her holy Mother, the Roman Catholic Church.

XCIV. The Cardinal Bishop of Novara, who then happened to be at Gozzano, was apprised of the event, and was solicited by the town authorities to grace the ceremony by his presence, if possible. To this eminent personage, who was far advanced in years, the Trelawney family had been already recommended by Cardinal Odescalchi; he therefore willingly acceded to the proposal, and intimated his intention of officiating himself on the occasion. Sunday, the 13th of October, was appointed; a day on which were commemorated two festivals; that of Blessed Mary's ineffable maternity, and that of England's royal Saint Edward. At an early hour, a large concourse of people hastened to the Church to be witnesses of the interesting scene. The Cardinal, in his episcopal robes, attended by his Vicar General—the Canons of the collegiate chapter, and other clergymen, prayed for some time in silence before the altar, and then, seating himself on the faldistorium, commenced the ceremony. The catechumen, clothed in white garments, then approached the foot of the altar, where, with modest dignity she pronounced aloud an abjuration of Anglican errors, and her profession of the Catholic faith. The Cardinal bishop then administered the baptismal rite to her conditionally, as is prudently prescribed by the Holy See, in similar

cases, owing to the well grounded fear of the former baptism being defective either in matter or form. After the christening, His Eminence addressed to the neophyte, an affectionate and impressive allocution, in which he forcibly pointed out the importance of the heavenly favour which had just been bestowed,—the peril from which she had been drawn of losing her soul with those who remain out of the pale of the true Church—and finally, exhorted her and the assembly to unite in presenting glory, praise, and thanksgiving to God—the giver of every good and perfect gift.

XCVI. After the discourse, the Ambrosian hymn was sung, and the Eucharistic benediction was solemnly imparted to the congregated spectators, who returned much affected and edified to their homes, and narrated the above-mentioned novel scene, to those who had been absent. The day following, in the succursal church of St. Joseph, the same Cardinal bishop confirmed the neophyte Lætitia, and at his Mass she made her first communion. This solemnity was also concluded with a “Te Deum.” Lætitia’s heart was now filled with joyful gratitude, not only towards God, but also towards the instruments of His mercy in her regard. Subsequently, in Rome, when admitted to an audience, by the Pope,—she related to His Holiness the circumstances of her conversion, acknowledging that, under God, it was owing to Father Gentili. Then shewing a miniature of the Blessed Virgin, which she had painted herself, she requested the Holy Father to impart to it his apostolical benediction, as she intended to present it to her before-mentioned Instructor. The Supreme Pontiff graciously complied, and enriched the owner of it with an indulgence.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST NEGOTIATION ABOUT INTRODUCING THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY INTO THE COUNTY OF LEICESTER, DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM, IN ENGLAND—MISUNDERSTANDING, ETC.

XCVII. We are now upon the eve of introducing Father Gentili and his companions into Great Britain. But, beforehand, it may not be inexpedient to relate briefly the origin of this mission, as well as its prosperous and adverse vicissitudes.

XCVIII. In the preceding book, it was narrated how Divine Providence had given to the Institute of Charity some signs of a vocation to promote the glory of God in the British Empire. My readers will no doubt remember the conversation in Rome between Gentili on the one hand, and the Irish Rector and Mr. Ambrose Phillipps on the other. On the return of the last-named Gentleman to England, in the summer of 1831, he began immediately to consider the ways and means of settling a colony of charitable religious in his native country. But, his being still dependent on his Protestant father, was a barrier to his generosity and zeal in furthering the interests of the Catholic religion. Withal, he did not omit in the mean time to promote the design. He had an interview on the subject with the Bishop of the district, the Right Rev. Dr. Walsh, who showed himself willing to aid in establishing the new Missionaries in Loughborough. All parties seemed at first, to be pleased with this project, so that

a priest was selected, with the Bishop's consent, to travel through England collecting alms, in order to found a house and church for the Institute of Charity, in the before-mentioned city. But this plan was soon altered, and the Bishop wished further proceedings to be delayed until he had written to Cardinal Weld in Rome, for counsel relative to the Institute of Charity.

XCIX. Of all this, Mr. Phillipps took care to inform his friend, the Father Rosmini in his frequent letters. These epistolary communications display admirable candour, fervent piety, and ardent zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of his countrymen. They express, moreover, the writer's sorrow at not being able to bring over the colony at his own expense; mention is also made of his unsuccessful negotiations with the Bishop and others—and finally, of the sinister reports, which were spreading against the nascent society, as well as of the evil consequences likely to result therefrom. With equal earnestness and affection, Rosmini replied to his young friend; and by good counsel, endeavoured to keep alive his zeal for the good cause, animating his confidence in God, and recommending that prudence, which is so necessary for those who try to second obediently, and not to anticipate presumptuously, Divine Providence in every thing. Above all, however, he intimated how requisite it was to obtain the approbation of the Bishop, whose wise circumspection he commended in not being willing to resolve definitively, before receiving direction and advice from Rome. In his letter (dated April 3, 1832), Rosmini writes thus: "I am glad that my Lord Bishop turns to Rome for counsel, because from thence it is that the Divine will must be manifested in these affairs. And in order that this negotiation may become more unexceptionable, I deem it proper not to write as you

advise, either to the Cardinal Vicar or to the Pope, because the less I enter into similar business, the greater calm do I experience—and the better I seem to ascertain the will of the Lord. In the mean time, I forward you a very succinct description of the Institute of Charity, which your own knowledge of Italian may enable you to translate into English: and then send a copy thereof to your Prelate. Any other information that may be desired, shall be forthwith communicated.”

C. Rosmini, besides, acknowledged that the horrible calumnies which were circulating in England against the Institute, gave him great pain: nevertheless, he consoled himself with the hope, that God would soon effect the triumph of innocence and truth. For he opined that, on this occasion, adversaries traduced not through wilful malice, but through mental ignorance. If they examined more carefully the questions at issue, and enquired attentively whether there was really any reasons for condemning an incipient and pious association of priests and laymen, who only sought to promote God's glory, and to sanctify their own souls, these parties, he trusted, would retract any injurious imputation, according to the rules of strict justice and charity. He added, finally, that it would not be difficult to send a series of irrefutable arguments, capable of banishing all suspicion concerning these absurd and gratuitous charges. But he apprehended that to weave a similar apology, would be to squander in vain much precious time. For his spiritual comfort, however, he would make known to him a brief recently received from the Holy Father, Pope Gregory the Sixteenth, replete with benignity and affection, of which so many proofs had been already given. In this document, His Holiness, after congratulating on the foundation of the

Institute, in the dioceses of Novara and Trent, shewed a desire to see it more largely extended, with the approval of the Bishops, and to encourage the faithful in the pious design, he bestowed on its promoters a treasure of spiritual graces and indulgences.*

CL Overjoyed at this news, Mr. Philipps anxiously awaited Cardinal Weld's answer to the bishop: as Lord Clifford had been written to, through him it

* GREGORIUS XVI.

P. M.

Dilecte Fili, salutem et apostolicam Benedictionem. Excepimus libenti plane animo litteras pluribus tuæ in Nos, sedemque Apostolicam observantiæ notis distinctas, quas die 10 mensis Januarii ad Nos dedisti, loquens de pia societate quæ dicitur Institutum charitatis, quæque in territorio Novariensi tuis curis atque approbante Episcopo fundata fuit. Et primo quidem nunciabas idem Institutum fuisse nuper a Tridentino etiam Episcopo in Diocesim suam accersitum, ibique nomen illi dedisse Ecclesiasticos plures viros, et eos quidem virtute, præstantes. Qua sane de re, Nos Deo bonorum omnium auctori humillimas gratias persolvimus; quandoquidem etsi Institutum hujusmodi auctoritate hujus sanctæ sedis confirmatum adhuc non sit, bene tamen de illo speramus, proindeque ipsum consentientibus venerabilibus Fratribus Episcopis dilatari lætatur. Deinde vero quod attinet ad sacras indulgentias quas ejusdem Instituti assæcis concedi postulabas, accipies Dilecte Fili, rescriptum cum nostris hisce litteris complicatum ex quo intelliges quemadmodum tuæ huic petitioni censuerimus annuendum. Ad hæc certiore Te facimus, pervenisse ad nos Librum super principis moralis disciplinæ ac Te editum, et dono Nobis missum, Tibique gratum pro munere animum profitemur. Quamvis autem Nos gravissimis Apostolicis principatus curis distenti librum ipsum legere adhuc non potuerimus, facile tamen Nobis persuademus eundem saniori doctrinæ consentaneum in omnibus esse, et huic tunc perutilem. Age vero dilecte Fili studium curasque tuas ad Dei honorem ecclesiæque utilitatem impendere pergas copiosam deinde pro laboribus tuis accepturus in cælo mercedem. Interea paternæ qua te in visceribus Christi amplactimur charitatis pignus sit apostolica Benedictio, qua tibi ex intimo cordis depromptam impertimur.—Romæ apud St. Petrum die 27 Mart, 1832. (Pontificatus nostri, Anno ii.)

was expected the wished for information would soon arrive. One of Rosmini's correspondents, an Irish Clergyman in Rome, was employed by the Cardinal to get the most precise and necessary details concerning the said Institute. Without delay, to satisfy the enquirers, Father Rosmini wrote a letter, dated the 9th of October, 1832, from which I quote the following long extract, on account of the importance of the subject: "The enclosed leaf is a short but faithful description of the Institute of Charity. I beg of you to get it neatly copied, and to submit it in my name, to his Eminence Cardinal Weld, who desires an explicit and precise notice of this Society.

CIL. "The relationship wherein the Institute stands to the Episcopate, and about which the Cardinal particularly desires to be informed, will be found clearly explained in the aforesaid regulation. In my opinion the nature of the Institute is such, that it can never come into collision with the bishops, because it does not act but in accordance, principally, with the request of the Bishops themselves, and is subject to them in all that regards sacerdotal functions, and the cure of souls;—being dependent only on its own immediate superiors for its internal government—the maintenance of religious discipline—the location of members—and the undertaking or resigning of offices, which, though assumed in consequence of their neighbour's solicitations, it never seeks to hold.

"From your letter, I also infer that his Eminence wishes to know what system Father Gentili and his companions propose to follow in England. If it shall please Providence that Gentili with others should go to England, they propose to act in conformity with the annexed rule: that is, to proceed quietly and calmly, and to confine themselves, in the first place, to the duties proper

to Christians and Priests; and as to external operations, they would wait for the Bishop's orders, and the calls of their neighbours. They would then be ready for any good work as long as they had strength to labour. If it were desirable that Gentili and his companions should take charge of a parish, it would be accepted, and administered according to canon law, and the episcopal ordinances, without claiming any exemptions or privileges whatever. If it were deemed preferable to employ Gentili in preaching, teaching, or assisting the poor and the sick in hospitals, these offices also would be performed. In fine, our Institute wishes its priests to have no predilections, but to be willing when legitimately required, but not of their own impulse, to assume every sort of good work, because in every thing, they opine, that God is equally served."

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE THE INSTITUTE, FIRST AT TRELAWNEY—AND THEN AT PRIOR PARK.

CIII. While in this way, the negotiations for introducing the Institute of Charity into the Midland District were proceeding, Providence disposed that it should be wished and asked for also in the Western district. The bands of Christian friendship, which united some individuals of the noble Trelawney family with certain members of the Institute of charity, suggested the idea and the resolve of confiding to a little

colony of the latter, the mission, which the former maintained on their estate for the benefit of the Catholics in the neighbourhood. The old Baronet, Sir Henry, having made known this design to the local superior of Calvary house, in Italy, the only difficulty that occurred, was the delay that prudence required for its accomplishment: for which end before all, it was necessary to address formal letters to the Abate Rosmini, as superior general of the Institute, and to the apostolic vicar of the district, wherein the mission was to be established.

CIV. The Baronet, by the instrumentality of his daughter, wrote first to Bishop Baines, whose answer, dated 5th February, 1833, was to the following effect: "To the proposal of establishing the Fathers of Charity at Trelawney, I can have no objection, nay, I willingly accede to the project of your pious father, with the sole reserve that he be first assured by good authority, that the Pope approves of the Institute, or at least of its members: I do not mean to say that His Holiness must have already approved of the Institute in a solemn manner as a religious order; but, merely that Father Rosmini's associates be not disapproved of by the Church. While these religious, as missionaries, remain subject to the ordinary—the fact of their belonging to a religious corporation cannot be excepted to I hope by any bishop. For the religious character is an additional merit, and a means calculated to make the possessor more pleasing to God, and, '*ceteris paribus*,' to render him a more efficient minister of the church. Wherefore I leave the whole of this affair to the charity and prudence of your father, hoping and praying that God may aid and direct him in the accomplishment of this useful and praiseworthy enterprise, and also reward him abundantly for his good work."

CV. Having obtained this favourable answer from the Bishop, they quickly sent to the Abate Rosmini, a formal demand, subscribed by Sir Henry Trelawney and his two daughters. The document, written in the French language, was to the following effect: "I take the liberty to write to you concerning our project of having two of your priests, and a lay brother, to take charge of the Catholic chapel in our mansion in England. Bishop Baines, the vicar apostolic of our district, on being made acquainted with our desire, answered in such a way as to assure us of his entire approbation, provided the approval of Rome be obtained (as you may learn from the enclosed letter), the testimonial, which we expect from day to day, we feel sure of, Father Gentili being well known in the beforementioned city. We therefore make bold to urgently solicit you will no longer delay the fulfilment of our desires, in granting us the abovementioned. Console us, then, Rev. Father, console me and my daughters, who unite with me in this request. At Domodossola, you will find at your disposal the means necessary for the journey. Your colony on their arrival in England will be temporarily lodged in my mansion, where there is a chapel. Later, a site can be chosen for building the new house and church. Should I not live long enough to carry out this plan, I have already taken some necessary measures for the work to be continued by my successors."

CVI. The reply of the Abate Rosmini, dated 17th July, 1833, was as follows: "I may assure you of my most ardent desires to second, in their full extent, your noble and pious intentions directed to promote the interests of our holy Catholic religion in your native country, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. If the humble Institute of Charity, whereof I

am the unworthy director, be called to so good and holy an enterprise, I shall deem myself supremely happy. In proof of the interest which I take in England's welfare, I may tell you that for a long time past, in all our houses, I have ordered common prayers to implore heaven's blessing on that nation so dear to the Church, and once called the Island of Saints. But, if any of our people have the good fortune to labour for the Catholic Church in England, the plan of the undertaking must be well settled, to be truly useful. For this purpose, I recommend the following mode of proceeding. Let the Bishop condescend to write to me or to Father Gentili (who is to have the principal charge of the mission), expressing the same benevolent dispositions already stated in his letter to Miss Trelawney. This letter (which should be written either in Latin or Italian), I will get presented to our Holy Father, the Pope, when soliciting his brief to accompany us to England. Advancing in this way, the affair will gain solidity and strength. It is not necessary to observe that our subjects depend on the Bishop of the place, in all missionary duties, as Dr. Baines says in his letter, excepting, however, the internal discipline, and the constitutions of the Institute itself; otherwise they could not be members of a religious Society. It is perhaps expedient for Bishop Baines to have under his own eyes the Institute's rules and constitutions, in order to be able to speak with full knowledge. If agreeable to your Reverence, I will promptly procure a copy for you to present to the Bishop in England. If these necessary preliminaries require too much time, you might provisionally engage a secular priest, and eventually make for the situation those economical arrangements you judge opportune."

CVI. This answer, though not wholly unfavourable,

sensibly afflicted the good old Baronet, who foresaw new obstacles to his projected mission, and despaired at his advanced age, of seeing it realised before he died. The answer appeared to him almost equivalent to a refusal, and it elicited complaints, and lamentations, which caused pain to his excellent and kind hearted daughters. On which account, they wrote to the Abate Rosmini, an urgent and affectionate letter, in which they described their own and father's grief at the postponement—and the not groundless fear that the bishop, after having entirely confided the business to Sir Henry, on seeing no result, might think that he had changed his mind, and abandoned the enterprise through inconstancy, or the fault of the Institute. They intimated the difficulty and impropriety of procuring a secular clergyman, and other inconveniences likely to arise from a half measure of this kind. For these, and similar motives, they implored him to shew himself a true Father of Charity, by sending to England, without delay, some angels of Charity, and apostles of Jesus Christ. Thus their afflicted father would be consoled—great advantages would also accrue to their poor country; and assuring him that if the Institute were once on the spot, every hindrance might easily be removed.

CVII. With these sorrowful apprehensions of the excellent Trelawneys, the Abate Rosmini sincerely sympathised; but as he had really at heart, that, the project should be permanently rooted and bring forth fruit, he could not be induced to jeopardise his plan, by yielding to vain sentiments of pity; wherefore, with firmness, and enlightened prudence, he replied from Trent, the 21st August, of the same year, as follows:

“I feel how reasonable is the solicitude you have to

see your excellent and pious father consoled, by getting his anxious desires about the English mission, promptly complied with. I take a share in your good parent's grief for the delay of the mission; and most assuredly, I should not wait for the morrow, if it were in my power to execute it to-day. But we must seek to do the will of God in all things; and as you observe in your letter, your noble father only wishes for the mission in accordance with God's will. Now you are well aware, that the Lord enjoins us to do good, not only with simplicity, but also according to the rules of christian prudence; since, by acting imprudently, we expose ourselves to the danger of not attaining the end at which we aim, and to mar the interests of God's glory. This being premised, I should not be acting in conformity with christian prudence, if I sent priests to England immediately, without sufficient grounds for hoping they would be useful to the Church in your country, and to the faithful who compose it. Because, in order that the fathers of charity may become useful in England, it is necessary for them to proceed in perfect harmony with the secular clergy, especially with the bishop. But how can this be the case, if the bishop be not fully acquainted with, and approve of, our Institute? How can he know any thing thereof, if he does not peruse its constitutions? What would happen, after the long voyage of our priests to England, if the bishop did not find our rules suitable to his views? How disagreeable that would be to us, to your father, and to all good Catholics. What good could we do if we were disliked by the pastor of the diocese? A misunderstanding of this kind is nothing new. You have read Church history, especially that concerning the Jesuits in England. Therefore, ere I expose my companions to so long a journey, now that they are doing so much

good here, it is necessary to convince me that they will do more good in the place to which they are to be transferred. I have, it is true, a pontifical brief, by which his Holiness, Gregory XVI., authorises me to extend the Institute of Charity in all parts of christendom, but, on condition, that it be approved of by the local bishops. How, then, can I justify this mission before the Pope, if I have not in hand Bishop Baines's approval? It is expedient that the constitutions be made known to this prelate, and if, on examination, they be found conformable to his views, let him send me his express approbation, as divers other prelates have already done. Hence, you see, that it is not at all in my power to prescind from all these formalities; for to go on in opposition to these, would be to act against charity—because what is contrary to prudence, is contrary to charity. In vain I try to find the means of promptly satisfying your zeal, and that of the excellent Sir Henry. Withal, I hope that short will be the delay occasioned by these formalities, if we do at once what is needful. And to demonstrate to you, and your noble father, my sincere wish to co-operate as far as it is in my power, with your pious intentions, I dare offer to write myself to Bishop Baines (whom I had the honour of knowing in Rome) and to forward him the constitutions, begging him to examine and approve them should he deem them worthy. If your father consents to this plan, I will send you the letter and the constitutions for the bishop, who may in a couple of months or less, give an answer. On the arrival of your prelate's approbation, I promise that I will soon write to the supreme Pontiff, to whom the Institute is particularly devoted, and therefore nothing important must be done without consulting him, and I will solicit the desired brief.

"You see that I take upon myself all that remains to be done in this affair, and that I exonerate you and your father from the most difficult steps to which you objected. After this, I think you will be persuaded how exceedingly desirous I am to please you, in sending the Institute to that well-beloved nation to which you belong. If all this turns out as I trust happily, next year, I shall send a clergyman to investigate and conclude every thing on the spot for the durable planting of a mission. Earlier it is impossible; and I may add, that with no religious order could an affair of this nature be expedited more speedily. The Bishop, and all good Catholics will not be scandalised at this dilatoriness; well knowing how indispensable it is in these affairs; nay, I believe that if we wish to act in a hurry, and without these precautions, we shall not inspire the prelate, or any person of good sense, with confidence. Pray interpret kindly these my reasons to your excellent father, who assuredly, like a wise and reasonable man, will, I trust, be quite satisfied with them, at the same time, beg of him to accept the sincere veneration with which, &c."

CVIII. This letter produced a good effect upon the Trelawneys, and they willingly resigned themselves to promote their missionary design, with that calmness and longanimity, which Rosmini had demonstrated to be so conformable to charity and prudence. About this time there came a rescript from Rome, approving the project of Sir Henry Trelawney, which greatly contributed to confirm the family in their good dispositions, as this papal document was the most essential condition required for expediting the religious colony to their estate.

CIX. While the Messieurs Trelawney and Phillipps were rivals in zeal for the acquisition of Gentili and

his companions, there arose a third competitor in the person of Bishop Baines himself, who wrote to Father Gentili, reminding him of the invitation made by the former, so far back as 1830, and of the hopes then given of the latter's services. His Lordship urged that the time was now come for Gentili to keep his first promise, and that there was employment for him at the episcopal college, Prior Park. Although the bishop wrote all this in rather a friendly jocose way, it was evident he wished to be preferred to the other candidates. On being informed of his Lordship's desire, Rosmini seemed more inclined to favour it than any other, because it assured the Institute of episcopal sanction, and also because the collegiate establishment at Prior Park was of greater importance to the Church in England: hence, he determined to accept the Bishop's offer, as soon as the others could be induced to withdraw their claims. In the mean time, he ordered Gentili to reply to the Prelate with simplicity and candour, stating that he was bound by obedience; and that he knew for certain his superior sought ever to do what was most agreeable to the Bishop of the diocese, in which the services of the Institute's members were required, such being the spirit of their vocation; the writer moreover added, that if Messieurs Trelawney and Philipps gave their consent, he would place himself at the Bishop's disposal for the seminary.

CX. As nothing had been definitively concluded with the last-named Gentleman, the Bishop easily induced him to give up his claim for the present, without renouncing his hopes for the future. As to the other obstacle in the Bishop's way, it pleased Divine Providence to remove it soon after. Towards the end of November of the same year, Sir Henry, on his return from the baths of Lucca to Laveno, fell seriously ill

and died in a few days. His death was fatal to the projected mission in Cornwall, for although he made some testamentary arrangement for its prosecution, the will was disputed—and law-suits and discord in the family at that time put an end to the hopes about the colony from the Institute, which was now entirely at the Bishop's commands.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APPROVAL OF THE POPE AND THE BISHOP HAVING BEEN OBTAINED, THE DEPARTURE OF A SMALL COLONY OF THE INSTITUTE IS SETTLED—GENTILI IS APPOINTED ITS SUPERIOR.

CXI. Notwithstanding the greater confidence inspired by having to treat directly with the Bishop, the Abate Rosmini did not think proper to deviate in the least from the prudent line of conduct he had marked out for himself in this affair, so that eighteen months elapsed before the colony of the Institute set sail for England. This delay was occasioned by the journey of Bishop Baines to Rome, and his lengthened sojourn in that city, A. D. 1834, for the transaction of important affairs concerning his ecclesiastical district. Among these not the last was the introduction of the rising Institute of Charity, with the nature and polity of which, he was not yet well acquainted, owing to the contradictory reports which had reached him. He therefore reasonably argued that Rome was the most likely place to get at the truth regarding it, and that

then he would be enabled to adopt a resolution in conformity with prudence and God's will. For this end he carefully examined the rules and constitutions of the new society, and not relying on his own judgment, he deferred the matter to the opinion of persons distinguished by their learning and authority. In fine, he discoursed on the subject with the supreme Pontiff himself, requesting to know whether his Holiness approved of the design of calling some members of the Institute to the seminary and college of Prior Park.

CXII. Having at length in all these high quarters, ascertained that the reports circulated against Rosmini's Institute were unwarrantable and calumnious; and being fully convinced that the rules and constitutions were sound and Catholic, he wrote a most honourable certificate of approbation, as may be proved by the original Latin brief, which we subjoin.*

During his homeward journey, Bishop Baines took Domodossola in his way, in order to have an interview with the Abate Rosmini, or Gentili, relative to the missionaries, who were destined for Prior Park. The last-named had been informed by a letter, dated Florence, of the prelate's imminent arrival, and had in consequence left Roveredo, to meet the English Bishop at Monte Calvario. During this journey, Gentili witnessed

* Nos infrascripti Dei et Apostolicæ sedis gratia Episcopus Siganus et in Districtu occidentali Angliæ Vicarius Apostolicus, perlegimus constitutiones Instituti a Charitate nuncupati nihilque in iis reperimus, quod sanæ doctrinæ seu bonis moribus adversatur. Maxime vero mirati sumus spiritum pietatis et charitatis, qui in iis ubique relucet, nec non singularem quandam discretionem his præsertim temporibus summo opere accomodatam. Quapropter easdem constitutiones approbamus, dietique Instituti socios intra fines nostri Districtus recipere et fovere statuimus. Romæ die 15 Augusti, 1834.

† P. A. BAINES, Episcopus Siganus.

a scene of frightful desolation. Owing to the continual rains, the mountain torrents and rivers had overflowed to such a degree, that the lowlands formed a vast lake. Even the magnificent road of the Sempione was under water, above the surface of which, in some places, only the roofs of houses and the summits of trees could be seen. The inundation had thrown down some dwellings, and menaced others, nay, entire villages, with destruction; so that the poor peasants were hastily obliged to climb the hills for safety from the overwhelming flood. The very city of Domo was in extreme peril. The tocsin in the Church towers was rung to warn the inhabitants to fly for their lives to the mountainous elevations. Everywhere prevailed the utmost terror, misery, confusion, and dismay. Finally, the rain ceased, the waters gradually subsided, and Gentili, incurring no little danger, partly in a boat or carriage, and partly on foot, safely reached the threshold of Calvary House, which he had no sooner entered, than he cordially exclaimed: "O quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine! O holy mount! to-day thou art dearer to me than ever! O foolish, blind, miserable, and unhappy world! O most sweet solitude and saintly simplicity reigning within these walls! Thou art more respectable and dignified than the refined civilization of towns, or rather of the haughty and sensual wisdom of the age!" (Alluding to a new sample of it, which he had experienced during his journey.)

CXIII. Shortly after, that is to say, on the 18th of September, Bishop Baines arrived at Domodossola, and immediately ascended the Monte Calvario, where he was reverently welcomed by Father Gentili, in the absence of his superior, Rosmini, who was then engaged in taking possession of the Archpresbyterial Church at Roveredo. However as Gentili had full

power to treat with his Lordship, it was arranged that in the ensuing spring, Father Gentili, with two other priests of the Institute of Charity, should undertake to teach in the college of Prior Park, French and Italian literature—Philosophy—Divinity, &c. The Bishop on the other hand, engaged to pay the expenses of their journey, to provide them with house room near the college, and whatever was necessary for their maintenance, but without any salary. The Bishop on being asked whether it was probable the Institute might extend itself in his diocese and elsewhere in England, answered and said: that “judging in a general manner from the spirit of your rules, which breathe only a desire for the greater good of the Church and of religion, and which are free from certain elements, that have, unfortunately, so often caused dissensions between the Bishops and the regular Clergy, and considering moreover the prudence and qualifications of the actual superiors, I deem it very probable that your society will be esteemed as eminently useful to our holy religion, and singularly adapted to the wants of the Church. In this case, there can be no doubt that it will be encouraged and spread in England, where disinterested labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, are more sought after, and better provided for, than in many other places.” The beforementioned approval of the Institute, together with an autograph letter, which contained a summary of the conditions agreed upon relative to the projected mission, the Bishop desired to be sent to the Abate Rosmini, in his own name. After which, his Lordship continued his journey to England.

CXIV. Having received these documents from the Bishop, it appeared manifest to Rosmini, that it was the Divine will the Institute of Charity should be sent to England as soon as possible. Nevertheless, to

put the seal as it were to this persuasion, he memorialised the supreme Pontiff, and after making known the progress of the Institute at Trent, Verona, and Roveredo, he came to the subject of Bishop Baines's demand for three of its Priests to be employed in Prior Park College; and finally, he implored the counsel of his Holiness concerning this new and more arduous undertaking in the Lord's mystical kingdom. This he did for the quiet of his own conscience, and to render the enterprise more creditable in the eyes of the Catholic world. The Holy Father, with great benignity, replied by a Brief,* dated 17th December, 1834, which con-

* GREGORIUS XVI.

P. M.

Dilecte Fili, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Redditæ Nobis sunt obsequentiſſimæ Litteræ datæ a Te die 5 mēſis proximi, et quod dono ad Nos mittere voluisti exemplum Operis a Te nuper editi cum Titulo "Frammenti d'una Storia dell' Empietà," Agimus quidem pro munere gratias, eſſi aſſiduus, ut ſumus, maximarum rerum occupationibus diſtentiſſimi legere librum ipſum non potuerimus. De reliquo gratum fuit ex memoratis tuis Letteris intelligere tuum Inſtitutum Charitatis per hos annos ad alia quædam loca Epiſcoporum auctoritate diffuſum. Quod vero rogas noſtram ſententiam de mittendis nec ne ad venerabilem fratrem Epiſcopum Sigensem occidentalis Anglicæ Diſtrictus vicarium Apoſtolicum tribus Inſtituti ejuſdem Preſbyteris ab ipſo expetitis. Nos negotium hujusmodi relinquendum duximus prudentiæ tuæ, quippe cui et ſacerdotum cornuadem vires, et cætera rerum veſtrarum adjuncta perſpecta ſunt. Quod ſuperest, Te Dilecte Fili, atque omnes ſedales tuos enixe in Domino adhortamur, ut pergaſis in omni humilitate et concordia ſedulam navare operam animabus ſub epiſcoporum ductu juvandis. Et ipſum luminum et miſericordiarum patrem ſuppliciter oramus, ut cæleſtis omnis gratiæ auſpicem eſſe trahat apoſtolicam Benedictionem, quam noſtræ pignus benevolentiæ, Tibi, Dilecti Fili atque illis intimo paterni cordis affectu impertimur.

Datum Romæ apud Sanctum Petrum die 17 Decembris, Anni 1834. Pontificatus noſtri anno xiv. GREGORIUS P. P. XVI.

tained congratulations on the progress of the Institute, but no particular advice, leaving to the prudence of Rosmini its further extension, and exhorting him to co-operate with the Bishop in promoting the eternal salvation of souls.

CXV. Having by this means obtained every desirable approbation, the Abate Rosmini next turned his attention to the choice of proper persons for the undertaking. Besides Gentili, two French Clergymen were selected; and he wished them to signify to him by letter, whether they were sincerely disposed to go on this distant and difficult mission. They all answered, that though discouraged by their natural insufficiency, they still had trust in Divine grace, and in the virtue of obedience, which made them rise superior to themselves. But let us hear how one of them, viz. Father Gentili, wrote on this occasion: "It is asked whether I am disposed to undertake, with divine assistance, the English mission, and to bear with the contradictions I may have to endure until death? To this I answer, that I am quite ready to go—nay to fly thither, so to speak, though I have a clear presentiment that my self love will there find its grave. If it please God that I should never leave it alive after having once set foot on English ground, I am quite content: as I am also ready to proceed thither with no other companion but my angel guardian, even were I to be exposed to the greatest crosses and inconveniences. Most holy Mary, who has always assisted me, will not forsake me certainly in that land, which was once called her dowry (*Dos Mariæ*), and which may be added to that other glorious title of the 'Island of Saints,' through the great and tender devotion to Mary, as shewn by the olden English in their costly offerings to her sanctuaries. At present, I purpose going as her advocate and cham-

pion, to reclaim my mother and Queen's rich domain from satanic usurpation: and if I succeed not with divine aid in converting the whole of that unhappy nation, I shall at least endeavour to enkindle everywhere the fire of Jesus Christ, and then leave it to His Spirit to fan it into flames of love. In fine, I repeat what I have said before, that you ought not to ask me whether I like this or that, but absolutely command me to do what you please, and I shall perform it as if it were enjoined by God and His Blessed Mother, in order more perfectly to imitate Jesus Christ's obedience to the will of His Heavenly Father, &c." In conclusion, he requested leave to pass the winter season at Roveredo with the Abate Rosmini, in order to prepare himself under his immediate direction and advice, for the future duties of his mission.

CXVI. This reasonable request being granted, Gentili, at the close of Autumn, left the Calvary Mount for Roveredo, where he remained in the family mansion of Rosmini until the month of May in the following year, 1835, occupied in philosophical studies, unless interrupted by some occasional call of charity. On St. Mark's day, the 25th of April, Rosmini wrote out the diploma, conferring upon Gentili the office of superior on the English mission, and accompanied it also with edifying written instructions, of which some were to the following effect: after recapitulating the external and internal signs of a divine vocation, the writer says: "In obedience to the voice of God, it has been decided that you our most dear brother be sent on that mission, having for your companions our dear brethren, Anthony Rey, and Emilius Belisy. You must therefore take courage, and implore from the Holy Ghost that prudence so needful for you, in order loyally to fulfil the designs of the Eternal Father

in an enterprise so distant and arduous. In the first place you must be intimately persuaded that the Institute does not seek to aggrandise itself—or to attract public attention; nay, rather, let it be obscure, and even cease to exist, if it can thereby contribute to the glory of God. On which account, be on your guard against mentioning the Institute, without necessity, or a reasonable cause; and endeavour to impress this characteristic spirit of lowliness on the minds of your companions. Study carefully to become perfect in obedience, and be strictly dependent on your superiors. Take care also not to exceed your special faculties. After attending to perfection in obedience, apply yourself strenuously to extinguish all earthly self-love. For, every member of the Institute, with confidence in the Divine mercy, aspires to exercise an universal charity, according to the knowledge of the Divine will. And this cannot be done except by him in whom Divine charity has supplanted all selfish affections of a terrestrial nature, so that he desires no other witness of his actions but God alone. For this end, let your discourse be modest and unaffected; and avoid every expression that savours of vain glory, or of another's disparagement. In fine, be ingenious in concealing yourself from the gaze of others, through a durable sentiment of your own nothingness.

“You are constituted superior over your companions, who are, however, to be your counsellors, especially with regard to the external affairs of the Institute. In your dealings with seculars, shun vain hopes and imaginary fears, and be guided by rectitude, veracity, honesty, and prudence. Your duty towards your companions may be divided into two parts: first, to procure their sanctification; secondly, to regulate their charity according to the spirit of the Institute. To

attain both these objects, the advice already given to you will prove very useful to them also, that is, to completely subdue their self-love, in order that they may yield submissively to the ordinances of their superiors, and also be well contented in equanimity and joy, and in unconditional readiness to sacrifice themselves for their neighbours, according to the known will of God. Observe, however, that your companions' self-love is not to be overcome by irritation, but by using the most delicate suavity of manners. The means of rendering them victorious over self-love is to set them an example of humility and sacrifice—the genuineness of which should shine through your every word and action. In the instructions, general and particular, on the self-sacrifice necessary for the practice of unlimited charity, let there be nothing harsh and arbitrary, but contrariwise, let all be compassionate and reasonable. In the exercise of works naturally humiliating and mortifying, let them see that when the occasion is presented them by Providence, it is God himself who obliges the superior to impose what is, though difficult, not above their strength. This correct judgment is a gift of God—and by superiors must be solicited with many prayers and tears. Towards each, shew ever your love and esteem, and dispose of them '*cum magna reverentia*.' In your laughter avoid every symptom of scorn and shadow of derision, and let your features be graced by an affectionate smile and cheerful gravity, which ought ever to characterise a Christian—a member, or a superior of our Institute.

“Do every thing in your power to comply with the Bishop's desires, preferring them to charitable works of supererogation. Charge yourselves therefore with nothing that can interfere with your engagements to his Lordship, or that is likely to give him umbrage.

At the same time, you must not, to please him, do any thing contrary to the spirit, or essential rules of the Institute, maintaining that independence necessary for its very existence, and the good it proposes to effect.

“You should behave towards the secular clergy in such a way that there may not appear any systematic division between you and them; but on the contrary, rather shewing them every kindness and sincerely polite attention. Above all, take care not to exhibit any disrespect, or to blame their conduct in their innocent recreations. For the purpose of not placing a barrier between you and them, I should like you to obtain from his Lordship the favour of being lodged in the college with the other professors—reserving the private house destined for you, as a place of retirement during a spiritual retreat, for yourselves and others. In the college, never assume a critical or magisterial tone, but remain submissively, and dissimulate indulgently those customs, which to you may not appear appropriate, and seek to gain the hearts of all, only by modesty and prudence—awaiting the hour of the Lord.”

CHAPTER X.

GENTILI AND HIS COMPANIONS GO TO ROME TO RECEIVE THE POPE'S APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION, BEFORE ENTERING UPON THE ENGLISH MISSION.

CXVII. Matters being arranged in this way, after taking an affectionate leave of his superior and brethren at Trent and Roveredo, Gentili set out for Milan and Genoa, whence he was to navigate with his two companions for Civita Vecchia, and thence go by land to Rome. Father Rosmini deemed it proper that the first members of the Institute, who were going to settle a colony in England, should beforehand prostrate themselves at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to demonstrate their perfect submission to the Apostolic See, and implore its solemn sanction, in order to give greater weight and substance to their ministry. They happily arrived in Rome on the 10th of May, and on the 15th, they were admitted to an audience. Being the first admitted, Gentili presented his superior's letter of recommendation, declaring the object of that little embassy. The Pope received both graciously, and made minute enquiries concerning Rosmini, his Institute, and the new English mission. His Holiness manifested particular satisfaction at hearing that three members of the Institute were going to teach Divinity and Philosophy, in the firm persuasion that they would propagate and defend sound principles in both these sciences. He also expressed surprise how the Abate Rosmini could find time to publish so many

writings, notwithstanding his care of souls. He rejoiced also to hear that he had transformed his arch-presbyteral house into a species of religious cloister, where there were no other domestics, but some lay brothers, and priestly assistants in his parochial duties, all living together in common, holding spiritual conferences with pious regularity and order, to the great edification of the good. The holy Father added, that the time was almost come to impart to the Institute the solemn approbation of the Holy See; for which purpose, said he, it would be expedient to send to Rome the favourable decrees of the Bishops, and other documents. At the same time, he manifested a desire of seeing Rosmini himself. After this discourse, he made a sign for the introduction of Gentili's companions, to whom he also kindly spoke; and when they all knelt down for the Apostolical Benediction, the Holy Father said: "The Lord opens for you a large field to do good therein; be firm in good principles, and teach sound doctrine"—then raising his hand to bless them, he thus concluded: "May God bless, help, and prosper you."

CXVIII. Before leaving the Holy City, our three pilgrims devoutly visited the Seven Churches, and at St. Paul's, entering the Chapel of the Crucifix, before the image of the Madonna, where St. Ignatius, and his first companions made their solemn vows, Gentili, also, in the joy and fervour of his heart, made his preparatory vows as a member of the Institute of Charity—and renewed them the same evening in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

CXIX. On the 22nd of May, leaving Rome for Civita Vecchia in the afternoon of the same day, they embarked on board the Sully Steamer. The vessel delayed its departure till evening, owing to the unexpected arrival in the town of the Pope and his retinue.

The Captain of the steamer went on shore to invite his Holiness on board. His Holiness accepted the invitation, and accompanied by some Cardinals, and other Courtiers, he ascended the deck amid the acclamations of the spectators, and the artillery salutes of the fortress. While the august visitor was examining the craft, one of his attendants (the present Cardinal Patrizi), observed the three missionaries in a corner by themselves, and recalled them to the Pope's notice. The Holy Father most affably said to them in the presence of many:—"Well, when do you start?" "Most Holy Father, we are here in readiness." "Very well, have you any news of the Abate Rosmini? How is he? Salute him from me when you meet him." Then turning to the Cardinals and others, he said: "These ecclesiastics are going to England to teach in the seminary of Monsignor Baines." Then turning towards them again, he said, encouragingly, "May the Lord bless your apostolical labours. I wish you a prosperous voyage. And when you see the Abate Rosmini and the Bishop, salute them both in my name." After kissing his feet, and receiving his benediction once more, they retired from the Pontiff's presence replete with joy and consolation.

CXX. At sunset they weighed anchor, and navigating all night they reached Leghorn before midday, and had time to offer the holy sacrifice. Towards evening they embarked again, and the following day, landing at Genoa, they proceeded by coach to Milan, where they hoped to see again their revered superior, Rosmini; but not finding him there, they continued their journey, and crossed the Lake to Stresa. Here they were detained, partly by the rainy weather, and partly by the hopitable importunities of Madama Bolongaro. On Ascension day, notwithstanding his

previous fatigues, Gentili preached in the parochial church, and attended for many hours in the confessional. The next day, however, in spite of the rain, they went onward to Domodossola, where they stopped for refreshment at the house of the advocate Bianchi. Finally, after dinner, they reached the beloved Calvary. Here, the travellers made their thanksgiving to God, and to His Blessed Mother, for special protection in so long a journey, during which, they had hailed the holy city, knelt on the threshold of the apostles' tomb, and received repeatedly the benediction of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

CXXI. After some days' rests on the sacred mount, on the 5th of June, our missionary pilgrims left the last confines of their dear Italy. Climbing the Sempione's lofty solitude and passing the Alpine barriers, they descended by Brigg, and on the following day to Lausanne. Here, on Whitsunday, they had the pious consolation to offer the Holy sacrifice, in a recently opened Church, surrounded by heretics, among whom, fifty years ago, that sacred rite was a capital crime. Gentili, a twelvemonth before, had preached in aid of the funds necessary for the building of this edifice. The parish priest, besides entertaining him most courteously, informed him of the conversion of an English friend, for whom Gentili had done much. After Mass on the morrow, early, the missionaries passed on through Vontarlier, Besançon, and on until they came to Paris, on the 11th of June. In this capital, they were hospitably received by the Abbe Ranzan. Leaving Paris on the 14th, they arrived on the following day at Calais, where they embarked at midnight for London. About noon next day, they landed in England's mighty metropolis. Gentili, in one of his letters, thus describes the first impression

the sight of it made upon his mind: "We seemed to be really entering the city of Pluto: black houses, a black sky, black shipping, and black looking sailors—filthy to an extreme degree—the waters of the Thames were tinged with a colour between black and yellow, and emitted a stench highly offensive; on land, there prevailed a confused noise, with horses, carriages, and men of every condition, running and crossing each others' path—in fine, to make a long story short, here the devil is seen enthroned, exercising his tyrannical sway over wretched mortals."

CXXI. Having a letter of introduction to Dr. Bramstone, Vicar Apostolic of the London district, they went to pay their respects. By his Lordship they were courteously received, and invited to dinner. At table, it happened that the good bishop placed a large portion of meat on Gentili's plate, and his companions, who knew the latter had not tasted meat for years, were in observation of what he intended to do. But he edified them by preferring the mortification of the spirit to that of the body, and practising literally the advice of Jesus Christ: "*Manducate quæ apponuntur vobis.*" After three days' sojourn in London, they set out for Bath—the goal of their journey. Bishop Baines received them most kindly, and tried to convince them that they would find in him another father, and in England a second home.

CXXII. As a conclusion to this chapter, we give a version of the Papal brief to Rosmini, concerning his three missionaries to England.

"TO OUR BELOVED SON, HEALTH AND APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION.

"There came to present themselves to us, your companions, and our beloved children—Aloysius

Gentili, Anthony Rey, and Emilius Belisy, who by your order, and at the express desire of our venerable Brother, Augustine, Bishop of Siga, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of England, were on their way, to assist the latter by their sacred ministry in the care of souls. We received them benevolently, and imparted to them our Apostolical Benediction, not doubting that, by their meritorious behaviour, they will correspond with the expectations of the before-named prelate. We were presented by them with some books, lately published by you; but of which we have been scarcely able to read the frontispiece and title pages, hindered by most serious occupations incumbent on our infirmity, as you well know, and by solicitude for all the churches. Nevertheless we thank you for the gift, and confirm our good will towards you with the Apostolical Benediction, which drawn from the bottom of our hearts, and united with a desire for every true prosperity, we affectionately concede to you, O beloved son, and also to all the members of the Institute of Charity.

“GREGORIUS XVI. P.M.”

Dilecte Fili, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem venerunt in conspectum nostrum Dilecti Filii Aloysius Gentili, Antonius Rey, et Æmilius Belisy, ecclesiastici viri sodales tui qui mundato pergebant ad venerabilem Fratrem petrum Augustinum Episcopum Siganum in occidentali Angliæ Districtu Vicarium apostolicum, ut quemadmodum, ipse optaverat, adjutricem ei in animarum cultura sacrisque ministeriis operam præsent. Illos omni excepiimus benevolentia, et prosecuti sumus Apostolica Benedictione, minime dubitantes, quin ita se gesturi sint, ut bene de animabus mereantur, et memorati antistitis expectationi respondeant. Accepi-

mus etiam ab iisdem libros nonnullos a te in lucem editos, quorum quidem vix frontem titulosque conspeximus, prohibiti scilicet gravissimis occupationibus, quibus impositam infirmitati nostræ omnium ecclesiarum sollicitudinem distringi jugiter non ignoras. Agimus tamen pro gratias: et nostram ergo te benevolentiam apostolica confirmanem benedictione, quam ex intimo corde depromptam, et cum veræ omnis prosperitatis voto conjunctam, Tibi ipsi Dilecte Fili, et Pii istius Instituti caritatis sodalibus universis amanter imper-
timur.

Datum Romæ, apud S. Mariam Majorem, die 15
Julii, anni 1835. Pontificatus Nostri Anno V.

GREGORIUS XVI. P.M.

BOOK THE THIRD.

WHICH CONTAINS A NARRATIVE OF FATHER GENTILI'S PROCEEDINGS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND, UNTIL HE WAS APPOINTED TO THE OFFICE OF ITINERANT MISSIONARY.

CHAPTER I.

FATHER GENTILI FIRST EXERCISES HIS MINISTRY AT THE MANSION OF THE TRELAWNEY'S, IN CORNWALL.

CXXXII. After their visit to the Bishop at Bath, the three missionaries thought they had reached the terminus of their journey, and were now to enjoy some days of rest. But it was otherwise; they had to start next day for Cornwall. This was owing in the first place, to the still unfinished state of the buildings at the College, and secondly to an invitation from the Catholic members of the Trelawney family to spend a short time with them, before the opening of the schools. As there was good to be done in that neighbourhood, this request could not be reasonably denied, considering moreover how earnestly and generously that family had exerted itself to get the missionaries over to England.

CXXXIII. At Trelawney house, the three foreign clergymen were most courteously received, not only by the Catholic but also the Protestant members of the family; although an intricate lawsuit was still pending before the public tribunals relative to the last will of the deceased Sir Henry Trelawney. Seeing with their own eyes the poverty of the missionaries, they offered spontaneously to provide them with linen and clothes, whenever they needed them. And this they did with such delicate benevolence, that their mode of bestowing almost exceeded the favour itself. For instance, observing that Father Gentili was without a warm cloak for the winter, one of the ladies took from the wardrobe, her late father's costly mantle, and placed it gracefully folded and covered with flowers, near an effigy of the Madonna.* She then begged her reverend friend to accept it, as if coming from Blessed Mary's hand; and to wear it as a memorial of her beloved parent.

A few days after their arrival, occurred the festival of SS. Peter and Paul. The Chapel in the house was decorated appropriately for Divine service, a congregation of both Catholics and protestants attended, and Father Gentili solemnly sung his first Mass, and preached his first sermon in England; taking his text from the gospel of the day, it afforded him an opportunity for descanting on the supreme authority of the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, so explicitly declared by these words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou

* This picture of our Lady, it is said, had been for a long time unnoticed in the house, ever since the Anglican change in religion.

shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. x. 6.) The fame of the preacher being spread abroad, a much greater number of people came to hear him on the following Sunday. For this reason he preached twice—taking for the subjects of his discourses, the sacraments of the Church Catholic, and proving from Scripture and tradition, their Divine origin; and the salutary effects they produce in those who worthily receive them.

CXXXIV. The devout attention of the people in hearing the word of God, caused him to regret his not being able to stay among them longer than three weeks; during this short time, however, the welfare of souls was zealously promoted. In the afternoon, it was Gentili's custom to call at the homes of the Catholics to prepare them for the Sacraments. He would also visit some of the better disposed protestants to instruct them in the Catholic faith. He collected some boys and girls together, he prepared them for their first communion, and also for confirmation, as the Bishop was soon expected. One young person whom he received into the Church, was the first fruit of his missionary labour. In his efforts to make converts, he was unfortunately without aid, as his companions, unacquainted with the English language, did nothing scarcely but try to learn it, and attend to their own sanctification, under his guidance, by going through a course of spiritual exercises. About this time, giving expression to his own feelings in a letter to his brethren and friends, Gentili says: "At length, here we are in England: here we are in the Island once of Saints, but now of heretics! Behold, at present, thrown here by Divine Providence, a little seed of our—the least of all—Institutes of Charity. And who knows the why and

the wherefore? Ah! may God grant us to die to ourselves, to humble and bury ourselves in our own insignificancy; in order that He who gives the increase may not find in us an obstacle to His greater glory. 'Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.' Ah! if the Lord deigned to send as many as are necessary for the work, what a rich harvest might be made! But terrible are the judgments of God upon the sons of men. This part of England was once a flourishing garden of faith; for, according to common report, there were formerly more monasteries here, than on any other part of the Island. In fact, almost every hamlet bears the name of a saint: but at present, faith seems here to be in a state of greater decay than elsewhere."

CHAPTER II.

GENTILI AND HIS COMPANIONS RETURN TO PRIOR PARK
—HE TEACHES PHILOSOPHY AND ITALIAN—CONVERTS A
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC—IS ELECTED PRESIDENT.

CXXXV. Towards the end of July, Father Gentili and his companions took leave of the Trelawneys, and returned to Prior Park. Here, besides his duties as superior of his religious brethren, who came from Italy, Gentili was appointed by the Bishop to teach Italian twice a day in St. Paul's seminary, and Philosophy twice a week in St. Peter's college. On Sundays and festivals, it was his office also to hear the sacramental confessions of the greater part of the community—to make a discourse to the seminarists, and finally to

sing high Mass and Vespers. The zealous and impressive manner in which he preached and performed the Divine office, induced the Bishop to confer on him other charges, such as to instruct the young ecclesiastics in sacred eloquence—and to direct the ceremonial, and chaunt, according to the Roman ritual.

CXXXVI. The last-named office, probably brought him into relationship with a distinguished Professor of Music, named Henry Field. The latter for some time past had been urged to abandon heresy for the true faith. But he used to say, he wished first to settle his temporal affairs, and then he would think about his soul. However, meeting one evening with Gentili, both entered into friendly conversation together, at first on the musical compositions of the celebrated Rossini, and in particular of that air in the opera, known as the “Barbiere di Siviglia,” and commencing with the words, “Largo al Factotum della Citta.” This was the air which Gentili used to sing (as he said in a letter describing the event) “when he was a fool in the midst of the world.” By degrees he led the musician from profane to sacred music—and thence to the subject of religion. This he did so efficaciously, that Mr. Field finished by resolving to make his general confession on our Lady’s festival, the Presentation, A. D. 1835. He kept his word, and being duly prepared, the Bishop received him as a member of the Catholic Church on the feast of St. Cecily—the patroness of music and of song. “In this manner,” (so Gentili concluded his before-mentioned letter.) “was verified in me the saying of St. Augustine: ‘Dum fuerint conversi, omnia cooperantur in bonum—etiam ipsa peccata.’ The Almighty being pleased to make use of my past follies to confound Satan.”

CXXXVII. Mr. Field’s conversion was followed by

that of some others; but the particular circumstances which attend their entrance into the fold of the Divine Shepherd are not recorded. By means of the spiritual exercises which Father Gentili introduced at Prior Park, an edifying improvement was soon visible. During Passion Week of the year 1836, at the request of the Bishop, all the Masters and students commenced a religious retreat under his direction. The rules laid down for the guidance of souls by St. Ignatius, and other ascetic doctors, were followed as much as possible on this occasion. He drew up a regular horary to promote recollection and compunction, he enjoined strict silence in the house. Then, with a crucifix on his breast, he preached several times a day, from a platform raised in the chapel. At first, the novelty of the thing, and the rigid discipline, gave rise to murmuring and criticism in some, but soon, the energy and effect with which the preacher announced the awful truths of eternity, aided by Divine grace, operated upon the hearts of his auditors, and made a salutary impression, more especially, peradventure, on those, by whom it was least expected. The good resulting from it lasted for a considerable time—as the holy sacraments were afterwards more frequently approached almost by all. Pious practices, and in particular, a devotion to the Virgin ever Blessed, after Gentili's fervent example, were more sedulously than heretofore cultivated in the college.

CXXXVIII. In the mean time, seeing the good likely to result from his activity and zeal, the Bishop had thoughts of conferring on Dr. Gentili, still greater authority and influence. To prepare the way, his Lordship confidentially mentioned his intention. But diffident of his own strength, Gentili humbly begged the Prelate to forego his design. To succeed the better

in his wish, Gentili wrote to his superior, in Italy, requesting him to interpose his good offices and authority. The Abate Rosmini complied, and represented to the Bishop that Gentili was too inexperienced to be made President of so large a community, leaving it, however, to his Lordship's option, to give the charge after a short delay. But the Bishop firmly insisted, and obliged both to cede to his will; so that on the feast of the Presentation, in public assembly, Dr. Gentili was declared vice-regent of the whole establishment—General Prefect of Studies, and President of St. Paul's Seminary, besides retaining the offices he previously held.

CHAPTER III.

GENTILI'S QUALITIES FOR GOVERNING—HE IS JOINED BY FRESH COMPANIONS FROM ITALY—ROSMINI'S LETTERS ON THE MEANS OF KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD—AND ON BLIND OBEDIENCE.

CXXXIX. Many were the qualifications which Gentili possessed suitable and meet in a superior. With a grave and prepossessing appearance, he united great talents, acquirements, and active energies. These he directed with pure intention, and ardent zeal, to remove abuses, as well as to promote order, science, virtue, and especially that which St. Paul asserts to be profitable to all things,—viz, christian piety. In this particular he was conspicuous, leading the way by the fervour and example of his holy life. Withal, we must

not dissimulate that there were certain natural defects in his character, opposed to the exercise of prudence and excellence in a governor. His ardent temperament, and lively imagination, exposed him often to too much sensibility at sight of the shortcomings of others; and urged his zeal beyond the bounds prescribed by a cool and calculating prudence. Want of experience of men and things in a foreign land, doubtless, caused him to resort to injudicious measures, and indiscreet exigencies: hence, sometimes he judged somewhat hastily, corrected with too much severity, incautiously condemned old customs, and made untimely alterations without deference to the opinions of others. This method of acting naturally excited the opposition of many—the approval of few. While the most pious applauded—the greater number contradicted him: so that his designs were not unfrequently thwarted, and represented in a bad light to the bishop. The following circumstance seemed to confirm the charge brought against him: viz., at the beginning of the next scholastic year, 1837, there was a considerable diminution of students. This decrease was described to the prelate, who was very sensitive on this point, as the result of the viceregent's excessive rigour, which was likely to ruin the establishment. Alarmed by these symptoms, the good bishop began to deprive Gentili of no small portion of authority—set aside several of the rules, and relaxed the discipline as too severe—diminished the number of pious exercises as excessive—altered some methods of teaching as unprofitable, and gave orders that no books, rosaries, crosses, medals, and other like objects, should be distributed without his express permission, though it had been previously done with his knowledge. Gentili, however, had laboured strenuously to collect, from all parts of England and

Italy, the disciplinary regulations of similar educational establishments, for the purpose of ameliorating those of Prior Park. He had promoted religious devotion among the masters and students: he had introduced a greater subordination to legitimate authority: he had made important additions to the studies, and stimulated also more diligence and taste for literary occupations. Moreover, to add to the decorum of that ecclesiastical institution—to harmonize its scholastic system—and to improve its economical arrangements, he importuned the superior general to send him some clerical auxiliaries for the teaching department, not only, but also some lay brothers to replace the hired servants of both sexes employed on the premises. Finally, having been informed that complaints had been forwarded to the Pope in Rome, against the professors and directors of Prior Park, (Gentili and his companions excepted), the bishop requested Gentili himself, to write to the holy Father an apologetic statement, in reply to the accusation. In consequence the voice of the malevolent was silenced; and the proceedings of his lordship were justified and commended.

CXL. In 1837, six new companions, three clergymen and three lay brothers, were sent from Italy to Gentili's assistance. In thus acceding to his often urged solicitation, the superior general complied also with the desires of the bishop and his vicar general; for the latter had also written to him, in the first month of the same year, to the following effect: "From Dr. Gentili I learn that your Reverence has determined upon sending us six of his companions, three ecclesiastics, and three lay brothers; but, that you entertain some fear about the expedition, owing to the bishop's absence. As his lordship is still in London, attending a synodical meeting of the other bishops, and as I well

know his mind on the subject, I may not only assure you of his consent, but also request you, in his name, to send them as soon as possible; for we are in the greatest need of well trained clergymen to educate the young ecclesiastics here: and since so much advantage has been derived from the three you already sent us, we greatly desire others belonging to the same Institute. Do not then hesitate sending them with all practicable speed, and if you let me know the day you have fixed upon for their departure, I will immediately remit to you the pecuniary sum required for their journey. In the mean time, I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you how gratified I feel in commencing a friendly correspondence with you for the benefit of our holy religion. Believe me to remain

"Most respectfully, &c.

"T. BRINDLE."

CXLI. The new missionaries brought with them two letters of counsel from the general superior, Rosmini. As these documents are replete with wisdom, learning, and useful maxims for those living under obedience, we deem it advisable here to give the entire version.

"To my dear brethren serving God in England.

"As some other brethren are preparing to join you I seize the occasion of addressing you a few lines, to remind you of your vocation in the holiness of charity. I beg and pray of you all, in the bowels of Jesus crucified, that none desire to turn to the right or to the left, but to tend straightforwardly to what he is called, that is, to procure his own sanctification, which does not consist in any work of genius, or human glory, or in attaining a great success in external undertakings; but rather, in practising those virtues which Jesus

Christ, the Saviour and Exemplar of our souls, exhibited in Himself, especially on the cross. These virtues are humility, poverty, abnegation, obedience, mortification, patience, and an ardent charity, which contains them all. This charity does not lose itself in subtleties, but proceeds with simplicity: it does not seek its own, but the things of God, and one's neighbour. On this foundation stands the Institute of Charity which you have embraced, and which you ought to have continually before your eyes, in order to persevere therein until death, not in a mere bodily, but spiritual union, in order not to deceive yourselves, losing sight of the true idea and form of the Institute, which springs from the Crucified on Calvary, inasmuch as from Him derive their origin those virtues which constitute its end. You, my dearest brethren, have so much the more need of keeping your hearts fixed on this end—esteeming the practice of evangelical virtue as the only good (since all else is vanity) as God's service, in your present position, is attended with not a few difficulties, perils, and distractions. All these, however, you may overcome by co-operating faithfully with grace which God does not refuse you; so that they will become as means to your perfection, and trophies of your future glory. This co-operation with grace consists in nothing else than keeping ever in view, and in being directed by your vocation, conforming your conduct with perfect submission to the spirit and the letters of the prescribed rules.

“In the first place, let each one beware of an excessive confidence in his own judgment; rather let him be persuaded that, among all the dangers of a religious life, the most insidious is an exclusive resort to one's private judgment, because man being a rational being, is inclined to reason without reflecting much, that his

reasonings are short coming, limited, and often fallacious—very different from those of God, which unmistakeably comprehend all things, past, present, and future. Wherefore, in his conduct, instead of adopting the result of his own reasonings, let each one take for his guide, the solely sublime, and most simple rule of the divine will, in imitation of Christ, who, giving an account of His operations, did not say that He acted through this or that motive, but always for the accomplishment of the will of His heavenly Father, in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled, and which enclosed what had been pre-ordained by His eternal Parent. Hence, our study, dearly beloved, should tend to acquire a knowledge of the divine will, and not lead to mutual disputes, whether this or that thing be better or not, according to limited human views. Let us only be solicitous about discovering the signs of the divine will, in order to execute it with fidelity and simplicity; with interior peace, and without any intellectual contradiction. If you consider attentively, you will perceive that there are three principal signs by which we may infallibly recognise the divine will, if we seek it with a pure heart.

“The first sign is the law of God fully and perfectly manifested to us by Jesus Christ, which law, for this reason, is called by theologians ‘*voluntas signi*.’ On which account it is also written: ‘*voluntas Dei sanctificatio vestra*.’ If, then, it be God’s will that we should sanctify ourselves, we may be certain of working conformably to this most amiable and most holy will, when we labour unremittingly to purify ourselves from every, even the smallest stain of sin, and to acquire all those virtues which constitute holiness. In every perplexity of mind between two

conflicting sentiments, let us prefer that which, in itself, is most conducive to sanctity—that which has most evangelical virtue, and without further hesitation, adhere to that which best exercises our self-abnegation, poverty, obedience, charity, and contempt, of those earthly things we cherish most. By acting in this manner, we are sure not to go astray, and are certain of operating in accordance with the most sublime and most excellent rule of the divine will which we desire to follow, and for which reason we belong to the Institute.

“The second sign which makes known to us the most desirable will of God, is obedience to our superiors. I say this to all, and in particular to the Father Rector, and the Father Minister, who ought to precede others in giving example of obedience to their own superiors; and I repeat this injunction also to their subject brethren. It is well to reflect that this is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which teaches, and has always taught, that perfect obedience to superiors is the safest way to know the divine will, and to ameliorate and to save one’s own soul. Let not the rash presumption of private reasoning then rebel; because such a rebellion would be directed not merely against the man who commands, but against God who manifests His will by means of that man. It is true there may be error or defect in the superior’s command, owing to the shortsightedness of human nature; but real error or defect there cannot be in God’s will, whereof that command is the indubitable sign. So then it is to be believed, that in executing the command, although accompanied by some erroneous ideas on the part of the superior, we are sure to fulfil the divine will: and that God intends to make the superior’s blunder subservient to His certainly most wise designs, which our

natural ignorance, and finite intelligence, are unable to penetrate. The only exception to this rule is, when the command of the superior involves any thing sinful. This case excepted, let our intellect be silent, when any thing is ordered to be done: let it not judge, criticise, or calculate upon any thing (or at most submissively represent to the superior the difficulty that may occur) but with a lively faith, and certainty of obeying God, let his obedience be prompt, simple, humble, and entire.

“When the will of God is not made known by either of these two signs, because neither the superior prescribe what is to be done—nor is it determined by the divine law or love of holiness; it is then expedient to have recourse to a third rule very necessary for superiors themselves, and to their subjects also, when left to their own judgment. This third sign of the divine will is the voice of divine Providence, which is heard in external events and circumstances. This voice should be calmly listened to, and examined by, the light of reason, aided by that of faith, but quite logically excluding every thing of a fanciful, superstitious, and arbitrary nature. To do good in outward occurrences not sought after by us, but presented by divine Providence. To perform it without unjust preference, and with becoming order. This is what, in such cases, God certainly requires of us. God is essentially the supreme good, therefore He wishes from us every possible good, and it is that which, being presented to us by His Providence, is not chosen by our, but His will. This third sign is subordinate to the second, as the second is subordinate to the first; that is to say, if the law of God obliges us to any thing, to that we must adhere; but if it be not obligatory, then we must keep to obedience. If even this does not determine what is

to be done, then we must try to know the will of God by the light of reason, and that of grace, which ought to accompany it. Moreover, in order that this light may not mislead, it should not anticipate, but follow Providence in external events.

“From the first and second of these three signs, arises the necessity you all have (when you desire to adhere closely to the will of your God) of meditating with attention and love, the rules of that Institute which you have embraced, since they are an abridgment and application of the gracious law of Jesus Christ; to these rules, in fine, both superiors and subjects are equally bound to be obedient.

“Wherefore let each one of you endeavour to live with great confidence in God, closely united with his own superior, in whom he should behold the image of God Himself. Be united also, all of you, together in the strictest bond of perfect charity, bearing with one another's defects out of an abundance of heart-felt love, having great care not only of self improvement, but also of that of the other brethren, edifying them, and co-operating to promote their perfection, according to the spirit of the Institute, and the will of superiors. If you comply with this advice, your humble brother, who, with all liberty in the Lord, writes it to you, hopes also to participate, hereafter, in the plenitude of your merits and prayers, which, with pure and upright hearts, you ought to present unceasingly at the throne of God. The writer loves you all much in the Lord, whom he implores to bestow upon you every blessing, grace, consolation, fortitude in affliction, and in the end, a crown of imperishable glory.”

Here follows another letter on blind obedience, which Father Rosmini wrote on the same occasion.

“The intimate knowledge of the exceeding excellency of blind obedience, paid to superiors for the love of Jesus Christ, is a thing altogether divine, and only to be attained by those to whom the Holy Spirit communicates this supernatural wisdom. Therefore, I would exhort you, my dear brethren, to pray with the most intense earnestness for this heavenly illumination, annihilating yourselves before the throne of the majesty of God, and beseeching Him most fervently to make you understand the lessons which His Son, our crucified Lord Jesus Christ, has given us from the bloody altar of the cross.

“An intense love of our Lord Jesus Christ, would lead us to the understanding and the possession of this treasure of blind obedience, for this burning love would make us understand the wonderful teaching and example which He left us regarding it. An example and a teaching which none can comprehend but they who love Him devotedly: and which, on the other hand, has ever been and ever shall be, *gentibus stultitia*. ‘Unto the Gentiles foolishness.’

“Another way by which to attain and to comprehend the preciousness of this virtue of blind obedience, for which the spiritual man is ready at all times even to die, is a firm and lively faith in the authority of Holy Church as the pillar and ground of the truth, and in the example of the saints whom the Church has canonised. For he, who has this lively faith in the spirit and the teaching of the Holy Church his mother, will be most fully persuaded, without any further reasoning, that blind obedience is an act of most exquisite virtue, and of the highest merit before God. Holy Church, most undoubtedly, has ever taught this truth in all ages and in all places, and glorified the heroes of obedience. And therefore, he who believes

the wisdom of the saints to be the true wisdom, will not doubt that the blind obedience which they all, without exception, practised, is right, reasonable, and most holy. Or if a doubt of it should cross his mind, he will condemn his own blindness and folly, and prostrate himself in silence before the wisdom of the saints, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking by them, and well understanding the force of those words of Christ, 'Qui vos audit me audit.' 'He who hears you hears me.'

"These words of our Divine Master are indeed a firm foundation of blind obedience. For they were spoken by Christ to the Church in the person of His apostles, and the Church speaks and acts by her ministers, and chiefly by the superiors of holy congregations and religious orders. So that there is the same reason for obeying superiors blindly as for blindly believing Christ. The man who believes Christ blindly, renounces indeed all inferior reasons, but only to attach himself to the highest and only true reason. Thus also, the man who obeys blindly his superiors, renounces indeed in one sense his own individual reason, and gives up his own private judgment; but at the same time he is, in another sense, following his own reason, because it is the reason of him who obeys, which being illuminated by the grace of God, convinces the truly obedient man that it is most reasonable that he should obey his superiors, without seeking any other reason than the very excellence of obedience.

"Observe here, then, my dear brethren, the error of those who say that there are only two authorities which can command us, our own reason, or the external superior. For they thus leave out the principal authority, which is God Himself, Who speaks by means of the superior. An authority far more to be trusted than

our own individual reason, which is liable to be deceived, and does in fact deceive itself whenever it refuses to obey blindly the Divine Will, manifested by the mouth of the religious superior, who is His minister and representative upon earth. I say that our individual reason always deceives us, when it persuades us not to obey. For when is it that we deceive ourselves? When, instead of seeking after that which is best adapted for our true end, that is, for the acquisition of virtue, of perfection, of humility, of self-abnegation, of mortification, of penance, in one word, of the imitation of Jesus Christ crucified, we stop short at some human consideration, at something of altogether another order from that of the evangelical virtues. For instance, if, when that celebrated hermit and great teacher of perfection commanded his disciple to bring daily a quantity of water, in order to revive a plant which had long been dried up from the root, that disciple had disobeyed on pretext of following his own reason, he would have deceived himself, and acted wholly against reason. For though it was indeed true that the act commanded him—to water that plant—was useless and unreasonable as considered only in reference to the end of reviving the plant, yet let us but take into consideration the other more exalted end, which consisted in calling forth the act of humility, self-abnegation, mortification, in one word, of obedience (for all these virtues are contained in obedience), and then we shall see clearly that obedience to that unreasonable command was an act most reasonable, most wise, and most holy. So holy, so acceptable to God is this blind obedience, that He not unfrequently testifies His approbation of it by miracle, as in this very case of which I am speaking; for as the history tells us, the withered plant revived and flowered again, under the hand of the

obedient man. And now who does not see, that in every act of obedience, paid for the love of God to our own superior, there is always included abasement and abnegation of self, humility, and the love of God; and that these virtues are in greater perfection in proportion as the thing commanded is most repugnant to our own sense and judgment? And if Jesus Christ has taught us that our perfection consists in this annihilation of self, for His love, and after His example, is it not plain that there is always a reason for obeying every command whatsoever, and that this reason is the more sacred, the more unreasonable the command appears, and that this reason is the highest of all reasons, to which all other reasons must give way? Because the reason of making ourselves perfect by annihilating ourselves for the love of Jesus Christ is so great, that there is not nor can be any greater. It is the sun of reasons which exceeds all the stars. For what greater reason can there be for an action than to attain the end for which we were created, and to attain it in that most perfect way which Christ Himself has taught us?

“Blind obedience is then a most enlightened obedience, and by it we renounce all vain and frivolous reasons, to follow the one only true, solid, and most blessed reason. But by whom can all this be understood, but by him who loves Jesus Christ? By whom can it be felt, but by the simple and humble of heart? On whom does such light shine, but on the poor in spirit, on the little child whose eye is single and pure? ‘*Gratias tibi ago Pater quia abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus et revelasti ea parvulis.*’ Therefore, that we may attain to the understanding of these treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God, let us prostrate ourselves before the throne of His Majesty, and with our

mouth in the dust pray to the Father that He would draw us to Christ our Lord, for undoubtedly that must be true which the oracle of Divine truth has spoken, that '*nemo ad me veniet nisi Pater traxerit eum.*' For if the Father, hearing this prayer rising from the depth of our hearts, in the name of His beloved and only begotten Son, shall open the eyes of our mind and free them from the cataract which our passions have spread over them, then we shall not only see the intrinsic and inestimable worth of the evangelical virtue of blind obedience, but we shall see also what would have been the fate of our poor bark, if it had had no better pilot than ourselves, and our miserable wills and reason. We shall see that the light of our own unaided reason, would have only served to shew us the hopeless state into which we had thrown ourselves. We shall see that the only star by which we can safely steer is not poor useless human reason, but the one only light which is ever bright, changeless, and benignant, the Will of God. And that the pilot who can steer us most closely by this auspicious star, is the superior actually given to us by the mercy and Providence of God, in that religious order, whatever it be, in which we are. For whatever he may be (unless he command us to sin), he is always the ambassador of God, the interpreter of the Divine Will, and the minister of the Divine mercy.

"We shall see all this with respect to ourselves, but we shall see much more if we are visited by the light of Christ's lovely wisdom, with regard to the good which might be done by us to our neighbours or for God's holy Church. Because it is God the Father of all men who cares for all, and it is Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, which He purchased for Himself with the price of His own blood, who cares for

His Church. And God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son, do not choose any to work for the Divine glory, and the good of the Church, but such as conforming themselves to the example of Christ, crucify themselves, and die to self, by virtue of holy obedience, self-denial, humility, and love of the cross.

“It is the follower of holy evangelical obedience alone who truly and completely offers himself to Christ and the Father. And he alone, as I have said, is raised by them according to their good pleasure, to minister to them in all those great works, to which from eternity they have predestinated him. Let us then cling more and more to holy obedience, renouncing self once for all, and let us strive after so perfect a grace, with the assiduity of humble and uninterrupted prayer. This, my dear brethren, is what I expect of you all. I expect that you be so enkindled with Divine love, as to be able to set fire to the four corners of the world; I expect that you will come forth full of the lovely wisdom of Jesus Christ, which is foolishness to the vain reasoners of this world, obedience, docile, meek, enlightened, dead to the world, alive to God, glorying in knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, from whom I beg for you health and benediction, now and for ever. Amen.”

CHAPTER IV.

SOME ENGLISH PRIESTS ASK TO BE AGGREGATED TO THE INSTITUTE—GENTILI VISITS THE TRELAWNEYS—IS REMOVED FROM PRIOR PARK—MAKES HIS VOWS AS A SPIRITUAL COADJUTOR—AND CEASES TO BE SUPERIOR.

CXLII. After good intelligence and peace had been established between the Bishop and the members of the Institute at Prior Park, there occurred another subject of discord. This was owing to the following circumstance. In the year 1838, it happened that some of the best among the superiors and professors of the college, manifested a wish to join the Institute of Charity, and expressly demanded the consent of the Bishop, and that of the Institute's chief Superior. Now, although from the beginning, his Lordship had promised to cherish and protect the Institute, as well as to grant leave to any of his ecclesiastics to become members thereof, if called by God, when it came to the point, it was not easy for him to give his sanction to it; for it was represented to him that it might prove fatally detrimental to his establishment not only, but also to the entire district. Among other things it was urged, that if by degrees the best and major part of the clergy were withdrawn, the Bishop in consequence would be rendered indecorously dependent on the Superiors of the Institute; or, if he discharged the latter, it would carry away from him in his utmost need, many of his most efficient labourers.

CXLIII. At the end of the scholastic year, 1838, Father Gentili received a pressing invitation to spend a few weeks with the Trelawneys, in Cornwall. It was hoped he might be able to reconduct some members of the family, from the stray paths of error to the right road of Catholic truth. He went, in fact, with the Bishop's license for this purpose, but was suddenly recalled by the Prelate, who ordered him to proceed as speedily as possible to Blandford, in order to settle a very important affair in a Cistercian convent, situate a few miles from the beforementioned city. In the mean time, the Bishop had come to the determination of depriving Father Gentili of his office at Prior Park, for reasons already known to the reader. To accomplish this, in the same year, His Lordship removed Father Gentili to another convent, at Spetisbury, in care of Augustinian Nuns. It was intimated to him, however, both by letter and by word of mouth, that his removal was temporary, and that it was required for the greater advantage of religion and his own benefit. Withal it must have been no small humiliation for Gentili to see himself banished, as it were, to an obscure corner of the Diocese, far from his religious brethren, of whom he was the superior,—and the more so, as the motives or pretexts alleged to justify his removal, seemed not a little mysterious, and excited some unfavourable suspicion relative to his past conduct. He bore it, however, with great humility and patience; blessing the Lord, and attributing the event to his own demerits.

CXLIV. At this time, the Lord was pleased to mix something sweet with the bitter in his chalice of affliction, by the joyful news, which Father Gentili received in January, 1839, of the solemn approval of the Institute of Charity, by the sacred congregation of

Bishops and regulars, on the 20th of December in the preceding year; and of this approval having been also confirmed by the Vicar of Jesus Christ. After receiving these tidings, he went to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar before the Blessed Sacrament, and recited the Ambrosian hymn nine times—inviting the choirs of angels and saints to thank the Blessed Trinity for this signal favour. On communicating the intelligence of the happy event to the mother superioress, all the nuns were soon assembled in choir to sing the *Te Deum*—and Father Gentili imparted the Benediction of the most Holy Sacrament. Later, his consolation was redoubled, when, on the 25th of March, the festival of the Blessed Virgin's Annunciation, in the conventual chapel, he pronounced his religious vows as a spiritual coadjutor of the Institute: the ceremony in use, on similar occasions, was performed by the Rev. J. B. Pagani, delegated for the purpose by the superior general.

CXLV. Some months had elapsed since Father Gentili's removal from Prior Park, and during this time the Bishop kept him engaged in the spiritual direction of various convents in the district, and there seemed to be no prospect of his recal. To the General of the Institute, this prolonged separation of the superior from his brethren, was a source of complaint; and to remedy it, he thought of remonstrating with the Prelate, or of choosing a new Rector from among the other members of the Institute resident at Prior Park. At length, he judged the latter course the more prudent of the two: consequently, he selected as Gentili's successor in the office of Religious Superior, the before-mentioned Father Pagani. This change in the direction of the small community was duly notified to Father Gentili, and he was requested to give, in person, or by letter,

the instructions he deemed opportune in this altered state of things. Although to comply personally with this request was rather mortifying to the natural sense,—yet Father Gentili preferred it, and the day after his arrival at Prior Park, the brethren being assembled together, with a countenance expressive of inward joy at his freedom from a great responsibility, he himself read the decree of his own deposition, and the election of a new superior. Then he addressed to the brethren present, a brief but edifying discourse, exhorting them above all to the exercise of charity, humility, and obedience; of which virtue, without saying so, a beautiful example was just set before them. After his exhortation, he knelt down, and asking pardon of God, and of his brethren, for all defects committed during his government, he concluded by requesting the new superior to impose a penance on him, before rising; also, he kissed the feet of all his brethren. At these humble and edifying sentiments of the ex-superior, the by-standers were tenderly moved, and rivalled each other in imitating him in lowliness.

CXLVI. On his almost immediate return to Spetisbury, Gentili wrote to the Father General, a letter, in which, among other things, he said: “In order that you may not imagine I have ill taken my deposition, I may tell you in the first place, that I consulted Father Pagani before making my profession, whether the vow of obedience comprised also the acceptance of the office of superior, and being answered in the affirmative, I hesitated more than once to pronounce my vows, and this was the sole temptation against my profession. Secondly, that were it not that you might have supposed me offended by some preceding events, I should have solicited, before now, what I had several times intended; viz., to be exonerated from a weight superior

to my strength. Thirdly, that your decree arrived here, on the last day of the month consecrated to Mary, ever Blessed, and that I esteemed it as a favour coming from her sacred hands. Fourthly, that I loudly thanked, and still thank God, His Blessed Mother—and also your paternity, as the instrument of their merciful kindness.”

CHAPTER V.

FATHER GENTILI PROCEEDS TO ROME WITH OTHER COMPANIONS, AND PRONOUNCES HIS VOWS AS A PRESBYTER OF THE INSTITUTE.

CXLVII. In the year, 1839, the Father General had resolved to do personally in Rome, what he had already performed by letter, viz., to offer his humble and filial thanks to the Supreme Pontiff for the Apostolic sanction given to the Institute. At the same time, under the eyes of God's Vicar, in the capital of the Catholic world, he wished to pronounce those vows prescribed by the rules of the Institute to certain members of the Society, whereby they bind themselves in a special manner to be obedient to the Holy Apostolic See. On which account he selected seven other priestly members, of whom three were in England—and among them, Father Gentili.* In the spring of the year, he wrote

* Besides the Father General Anthony Rosmini, and Father Gentili, there were the Rev. Charles Gilardi,—J. B. Pagani,—G. R. Setti,—G. M. Toscani,—Francis Puceher,—and Emilius Belisy.

to the three elected at Prior Park to ask the Bishop's license for their journey to Rome, and to arrange with his Lordship about the most convenient time. It was then settled that their departure might take place during the scholastic vacation at midsummer. They set out about the middle of July, and after passing through France and Switzerland, and crossing the Sem-pione Alps, they arrived at Monte Calvario on the 29th of the same month. After a few days' rest, together with the Father General, and the other elect, they continued their Romeward journey, and at length safely reached the Holy city, on the vigil of the Assumption.

CXLVIII. By means of his Eminence Cardinal Castacane, a private audience was solicited of the Holy Father, who was pleased to grant it on the evening of the 17th. The Abate Rosmini was the first admitted to the presence chamber, and after half an hour the others were called in, and received with paternal benevolence and singular affability, especially Father Gentili, who was known to His Holiness. After taking leave of the Pope, the octave of the Assumption was the day fixed upon—and the place selected was a subterranean chapel near the catacombs of Saint Sebastian, for the making of our vows as Presbyters of the Institute of Charity. The preceding time was spent in visiting the seven churches, and in other devout preparations. On the appointed morning, the 22nd of August, Father General offered the Divine sacrifice at the altar in the crypt, attended by the presbyters, with no other witnesses save a good Franciscan lay-brother, the Sacristan of the Basilica. At the communion, the celebrant holding the consecrated Host, first pronounced his vows with a loud voice on the altar: then he turned towards his companions, still having the holy sacrament in his hand, while they one

after another, pronounced the same votive formula. Finally all sealed their profession with a sacramental communion. After Mass, and a thanksgiving to God, and the saints and martyrs, and after visiting the venerable tombs of the latter, we returned to the city, and prepared to separate: some for upper Italy—and some for England. The Father General, however, with one companion, remained in Rome to urge the expedition of the Apostolic letters approving the Institute.

CHAPTER VI.

FATHER GENTILI IS DETAINED IN ITALY—HIS TRIALS—
IS RE-DEMANDED AND DESTINED FOR ENGLAND.

CXLIX. Before parting, the Father General took Gentili aside, and after tenderly embracing him, gave him to understand that probably he would not have to return with the others to England, but to remain in Italy; and that until further orders, he must take up his abode at Monte Calvario. The superior came to this determination for the three following reasons: In the first place, he wished to relieve from embarrassment Bishop Baines, who seemed averse to the recall of Gentili to Prior Park; and on the other hand, to employ him exclusively in the direction of convents would not prove agreeable to the members of the Institute. In the second place, it was considered that Gentili might be more usefully occupied in charitable works in Italy; or in founding a new mission in England, as certain providential signs indicated as soon

likely to happen. Thirdly, it was intended also to afford Father Gentili an occasion of exercising those virtues so becoming a religious man; viz., humility, indifference, and obedience.

CL. In this trial, the virtue he displayed was the more solid and genuine, inasmuch as the interior struggle he had to endure was great and violent. Although at the first announcement, he answered the superior that in all things he wished only to please God, nevertheless, man's infernal foe assaulted him with a crowd of troublesome thoughts, which threw him for some days into a melancholy depression of spirits. For instance, the astute enemy suggested, "Whence this unexpected resolve of thy superior? Among all the members of the Institute, art thou not the man, to whom God gave the most certain signs of a call to labour in His English vineyard? Nay, wert thou not in some manner called to that mission, before being aggregated to the Institute? Hast thou not been particularly invited for the purpose by Bishop Baines, and the Messieurs Philllips and Trelawney, and, on this account, sent as the superior of thy colleagues into that country? And thy commission, was it not also sanctioned and blessed by the Supreme Pontiff? And then, what fault hast thou committed to merit this recal? Didst thou not work hard to remedy abuses, and to promote every salutary measure at Prior Park, and elsewhere? Didst thou not labour under and endure all sorts of contradictions and humiliations; there to uphold the Institute and to extend the kingdom of God? Didst thou not promptly give up to others the field sown by thyself at Prior Park, to live almost like an excommunicated and banished person elsewhere? Didst thou not patiently and joyfully yield thy office of superior? Why then are all these thy merits forgotten, so as to offer

thee nought but the cup of bitterness and grief, instead of rewarding thee with praise and consolation? After having conceived such great hopes, and heard such prosperous tidings of thy actions in that remote part of Christendom, what will thy brothers, friends, and acquaintances, now think of thy recall and deposition? They will suspect that thou wast unequal to the assumed task; and that either through ignorance or imprudence, thou hast committed some grievous fault, which renders thy presence there either useless or unsafe? In case thou art held in such estimation as this, what good canst thou do to thy neighbour, or the Church in Italy? Wilt thou not be looked upon by all, with apprehension, as a man of blasted or questionable character? And even thy own superior himself, could he have adopted so extremely painful a resolution, if the most unfavourable reports, either verbal or written, had not reached him concerning thy affairs? Wherefore, what esteem or affection canst thou expect from him, and thy other brethren in religion? What, in fine, is to be thy lot in life for the future?"

CLL. These sorrowful ideas began to disturb his mind during the night previous to his departure from Rome, and they also continued to molest him so excessively during the journey, that on his arrival at Civita Vecchia, he might, it seemed, have exclaimed in the words of our Divine Saviour: "*Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.*" But remembering the Apostle James's advice for the afflicted to seek for comfort in prayer: "*Tristatur aliquis vestrum oret,*" (v.) he left his travelling companions behind, and entering the cathedral Church of the city, he prayed prostrate before the altar for a long time, and with a contrite and humbled heart, implored Jesus Christ to pity and

protect him from the assaults of the wicked one. After this prayer, he experienced a vivid light in his soul, which clearly exhibited to the eye of memory all his unfaithfulness and negligence in the Divine service; and proved to him that he ought to look upon himself in the presence of Eternal Truth, like salt that had lost its savour; and as only fit to be cast away and trodden under foot by men; or like that tree, which after the third and fourth year, had by the Divine Master been found unfruitful, and therefore was only fit to be cut down, and cast into the fire. Hence it appeared to him to give way to sadness or complaint, for any present or future humiliation, must be the effect of vain pride, or blindness, which prevented him from seeing God's mercy, in exchanging a brief mortification for the pains of hell, that he had deserved for his sins. These lucid sentiments restored in some degree serenity to his mind; but he had scarcely left the church, when he fell again into a fit of desolation almost equalling the former in violence. He therefore returned again to the church both before and after dinner; but each time experiencing similar vicissitudes: viz. a calm after prayer, and a return of the tempest after leaving the church, as if that was the time for the power of darkness. In this state of mind he set sail from Civita Vecchia, and on the 24th of August landed at Leghorn, where he remained the following day, which happened to be the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, and dedicated to the Sacred Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the company of his brethren, while visiting the churches of the city, he entered the Armenian temple, wherein a beautiful image of the Queen of Angels happily attracted his attention. Prostrating himself before it, and shewing to his dear mother his own afflicted heart, with humble and filial confidence, he begged to

remind her, that the present festival in honour of her sacred heart, had been first introduced at Rome, by his own paternal uncle—the pious Abate Marconi, and that in consequence, he hoped to be freed on that day from his many temptations, in order to execute cheerfully in every thing, the will of her Divine Son! Wonderful to relate, he had no sooner finished this devout prayer, than he felt himself profoundly moved to compunction—and a torrent of sweet tears soon flowed from his eyes. Thus his heart he felt had become durably changed; and replete with consolation, he was enabled to thank the Lord, who, after permitting Satan to depress him so frightfully, had at length filled him with such spiritual fortitude and joy, as to render pain and confusion not only tolerable, but desirable even, ‘*usque ad mortem.*’

CLII. Gentili, also, had soon to experience the truth of that inspired sentence of St. James the Apostle, (iv.) “*Humiliamini in conspectu Domini, et exaltabit vos.*” For shortly after he had passed with resignation through the beforementioned ordeal, and was preparing to resume the works of charity he had formerly exercised in the Calvary house of retreat, pressing letters about him came from England to Father General Rosmini. In the name of Bishop Walsh, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, Mr. Phillipps, of Gracedieu, solicited most earnestly, that Father Gentili might be sent back to England without delay. “This holy man,” (to use the words of the writer,) “this man of God, this truly apostolic man—this man, worthy of carrying the faith of Christ: *apud gentes, coram regibus et principibus.*” He held out great promises, and offered the use of his own family mansion and table to the edifying missionary, whose company he wished to enjoy. The Bishop wished to confide to Gentili’s spiritual care, our Lady’s

Church at Gracedieu, and that of Holy Cross at Whitwick; as there was for both only one priest, occasionally assisted by the Religious of St. Bernard's monastery. But as the assumption of parochial duties is inhibited by the rules of the Cistercian order, the monks were desirous of attending solely to a contemplative life. Father Pagani also wrote from Prior Park, in behalf of Bishop Baines, who stood in great need of clerical labourers; for two of his priests had fallen ill—and two others had retired from the District,—so that some convents at that time were deprived of spiritual Directors. At length the Bishop himself wrote with his own hand to Rosmini, in order to induce the Father General to allow the return of Gentili, whom his Lordship designated as “a priest of much virtue, who had done much good in his District, and who it was hoped would do still more for the future.”

CLIII. Having maturely considered these requests in the presence of God, the Father General perceived in them unequivocal signs, that it was God's will Gentili should be again employed on the English mission. He moreover deemed it would prove more advantageous to the Church, if Gentili's services were given to the Bishop of the central instead of the western district. However, as his companions had already taken their departure for England, and as Gentili had suffered not a little during his voyage from Rome, it was deemed advisable for him to rest until the Spring of the following year. He went during the inclement season to Stresa, where he was hospitably entertained by Madama Bolongaro. Indeed he stood much in need of this kind Lady's charitable attentions, owing to an obstinate cough and other ailments, which molested his health during the winter, so that it was

feared, he would not be able to undertake a long journey, for some time, without danger.

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER GENTILI'S SAFE ARRIVAL AT GRACEDIEU—HIS MISSIONARY TRIALS.

CLIV. His weak state of health induced him to procrastinate his departure from Italy, until the mildness of the season diminished the peril of a journey to England. At length, after fresh solicitations from his English correspondents, and an assurance that the strength of the traveller was equal to the task, the Father General gave his consent for him to depart. Gentili, therefore, took leave of his superior and friends, on the 5th of May, and crossing the Alpine barrier, called the Sempione, he travelled through France on his way to Great Britain. Speaking of this voyage, he used to say, that he had anticipated it would turn out prosperous, because reciting every day, the hymn, "Ave Maris stella," he asked this favour of most Holy Mary with these words: "Iter para tutum," and also because the goal of his journey was a sanctuary named (Grace Dieu) or the Grace of God, and dedicated to our "Lady of Grace."

CLV. In fact, in the chapter of accidents more or less inevitable in a long journey, he met with no untoward encounter, and his health also improved visibly. While passing through France, he was gratified by seeing the advance of religion—and of its ministers in

public estimation: he observed that the desecrated emblems of human redemption had been restored, and embellished in several places—that the ecclesiastics appeared more edifying in their outward deportment, by wearing the clerical costume—that the churches were more frequented—and that there was more modesty, in dress, among the people. At Paris he met with several of his literary countrymen and acquaintances. With these he had some long conversations on philosophy, Belles Lettres, and the Institute of Charity. In this new society, great interest was taken by some of them, who learnt its object and rules, and especially its tendency to promote harmony between seculars and regulars.

CLVI. Quitting the French capital—Gentili proceeded, via London, to Prior Park, where arriving on the 20th of May, he joyfully embraced several of his former companions. He, however, grieved to learn that Bishop Baines was absent in Rome. At Prior Park, in a spiritual retreat under the direction of Father Pagani, Gentili prepared himself during a fortnight, for his new and arduous mission. Among other good purposes, he resolved for the future to be on his guard against dissipation of mind—to consider that his duty as a member of the Institute, was in the first place to sanctify his own soul, no matter what the external circumstances might be in which Providence might place him:—to shew himself more sincere and obedient towards his lawful superiors, and carefully to examine his conscience in this respect—to dive deeper into his own nothingness, and in the desire of holy obscurity and of the world's contempt—to meditate constantly on the maxims of Jesus Christ—the life of His blessed Mother, in order to conform himself thereunto—and finally to love poverty as an inseparably dear companion.

CLVII. From Prior Park he went to Cannington on a visit to a devout Catholic lady, who had requested his spiritual assistance, through the medium of the vicar general. Hence he proceeded to Birmingham and Oscott to get Bishop Walsh's blessing, and the necessary faculties for his ministry. He also paid his respects to the president and vice president of that episcopal college, who were both bishops elect—and his good friends. After a very cordial reception he took his leave, and set out for Grace Dieu, where he arrived on the 12th June. At this centre of his new toils, he was heartily welcomed by his host and friend Mr. Phillipps, who accommodated him in his house as much as possible, in accordance with Father Gentili's well-known pious and frugal tastes as a religious man. The first thing which he did after his arrival was to pay a visit to the altar, and to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. And in order to be able to exercise freely his devotion towards so great a mystery, he had a chamber assigned him near the chapel.

CLVIII. If Gentili had looked at the new field confided by Providence to his culture, in a natural point of view, there was in the prospect enough to make him soon disgusted with his task; and to induce him to carry his zeal and splendid talents to a place where they might be more usefully employed. But, beholding this mission with the eyes of faith, and animated by an apostolic spirit, he sought not his own glory or satisfaction, but solely to promote, according to God's will, the reign of Jesus Christ upon earth—to save souls created in the divine image and likeness, and ransomed by the precious blood of the world's Redeemer; consequently each one of these souls appeared to him equivalent in value to an infinite treasure.

Assuredly nought else but this faithful wisdom,

deep rooted in the soul of the Catholic priest, can inspire him with that courage, patience, constancy, and joy, which characterise apostolic men, even when the result but ill corresponds with their toils, and when the vineyard, for a long time, produces to the husbandman little or no good fruit. Withal, the Lord in His merciful Providence ordinarily disposes that a year of sterility should be succeeded by a year of abundance; and that the mystic fishers of men, after labouring all the night in vain, should, at length, find their net so overcharged, as to require the help of others to drag it in safety to shore. This was the case with Gentili in a certain sense.

CLIX. The mission confided to his care at first extended from Grace Dieu, to Belton, Osgothorpe, and Sheepshead. The only Catholic chapel was situate in the centre of Mr. Phillipps' estate, at about two miles distance westward from Osgothorpe, four miles east from Sheepshead, and two good miles northward from Belton. Of the surrounding population, numbering about 6000 souls, only twenty-seven were Catholics, the rest were divided among different Protestant sects. Of the Catholics, four lived in Sheepshead, nine in Osgothorpe, two in isolated places, and the remainder formed Mr. Phillipps's household. Of this small Catholic flock, eight were children—three of them sick, and the whole of them poverty-stricken, with the exception of Mr. Phillipps, and one of the Sheepshead inhabitants. Great, moreover, were the privileges possessed by heresy adverse to the true faith in this part of the country. The latter had only one clerical champion, and he a foreigner—the former several native ministers: Gentili was poor, and restricted to one little church—the parsons had several churches and were well endowed with pecuniary means for making

proselytes: Gentili had to train his neophytes—they had every where public and private schools for education: Gentili was protected by Mr. Phillipps, jun.—they, by the opulent Mr. Phillipps, sen., and other Protestant gentlemen: Gentili had to preach the word of God in all its austere truth—they taught doctrines tinged with a christianity flexible to all the fancies of the mind, and the passions of the heart. Under these circumstances, a missionary placed at the head of a handful of Catholics, could not be exposed to many temptations of vanity, selfishness, or human respect, in the exercise of his sacred ministry. It may be easily imagined the danger was the other way, that is, of losing courage at sight of so many obstacles and hardships. But Gentili took heart in the Lord, who commissioned him, and set to work with alacrity, and we shall have occasion ere long to be edified by his patient diligence, no less than comforted by his happy success.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS ORDINARY OCCUPATIONS—OPPOSITION FROM PROTESTANT MINISTERS—CONVERSIONS TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH, &c.

CLX. The ordinary occupations of Father Gentili in his missionary character, it may be as well here briefly to describe. In general, they may be reduced to those duties incumbent on parish priests towards their own parishioners, besides the means which an enlightened

charity suggested to gain Protestants over to the Catholic faith. In particular, as regards the Church services at home, he adopted the following course: Every morning on ferial days, he recited alternately with the people, the Litany of Loretto, except Thursday, when, by the Bishop's orders, certain prayers were said for the conversion of England; after which, he gave benediction with the Blessed Sacrament: at eight o'clock, he offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass. On Sundays and festivals, after some English prayers, there was a procession previous to the high Mass, which, with Gregorian accompaniment, was celebrated with all possible solemnity. At the end of Mass, a sermon for the adults was followed by a catechetical instruction for children. At three o'clock in the afternoon, vespers were sung, and a discourse, or homily, given on the gospel of the day; every first Sunday in the month, the services concluded with a solemn benediction of the most Holy Sacrament. At night, before retiring to rest, the missionary also recited family prayers, and briefly read on some spiritual subject in Mr. Phillipps's domestic chapel. Each day of the week, when not prevented, he made the circuit of his mission, to visit the infirm, aid the poor, instruct the ignorant, make peace among those who were at variance, and to perform other similar works of charity in Catholic families. With regard to Protestants, he proposed, in imitation of our divine Saviour, not so much to seek in an arbitrary way, as prudently to seize the occasions presented by the Providence of our heavenly Father, for attracting them to the true faith. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, two hours were fixed for doctrinal instructions to catechumens, and he patiently continued this plan, although at first, and for some time, only two candidates attended these Church meetings.

While visiting a sick convert at Osgothorpe, he got leave to explain the catechism once a week to seven or eight Protestants, who voluntarily came to hear him in the sick man's house. Mr. Phillipps having succeeded in hiring a spacious room in one of the inns at Sheepshead for six months, it was soon converted into a little chapel. On Wednesday evenings, Father Gentili used to attend at six o'clock, and after singing the Lord's prayer, he gave instructions for about an hour, and concluded with the before-mentioned hymn. At first he had about twelve hearers, but soon the number considerably increased, so that, at times, there was not room inside for the crowd. Some of them manifested a desire to become Catholics, and were prepared by Father Gentili for reception into the Church. As the number of the latter began to augment, he was obliged to separate the children from the adults, and to give instruction on different days—that is, on Mondays to the former, and on Wednesdays to the latter, in order to adapt his discourse to the intelligence of both classes—and avoid the inconvenience of an overcrowded room. Seeing this hopeful movement towards Catholicism, he bought with money collected among his friends, the remaining two lives on a piece of ground belonging to the Phillipps family, for the purpose of building thereon a more decorous place of worship. Shortly after, he succeeded in hiring two rooms—one at Belton, the other at Osgothorpe, and converted them into public chapels. He commenced the exercise of his sacred ministry in one during the Novena of the Blessed Virgin's presentation; and in the other, on the octave of the Immaculate Conception.

CLXI. These favourable advances towards Catholicism, gave great umbrage to the Anglican ministers, who endeavoured to recover their lost ground by their

usual brow-beating system. For not satisfied with previously calumniating the Catholic Church and her missionaries from the pulpits of error, they also sought out those who had received from Gentili any Catholic books, and took them away. They promised employment, with land to grow potatoes, and held out other advantages to induce them to renounce Catholicity and adhere to Protestantism. The parson at Sheepshead in particular, distinguished himself by his maniacal zeal: and did what he could to prevent parents from permitting their children to attend the Catholic chapel: he sent emissaries to distribute tracts calculated to excite ridicule against the Catholic belief concerning sacred images—indulgences, prayers for the dead—the real presence, &c. He engaged a curate to assist in opening a school for children, to whom lessons were given to learn at the precise time that Father Gentili came to give his instructions, and thus they were prevented from hearing him. At the same time also appointed by Gentili for the adults, the parson began to give a no-popery lecture. But the Almighty confounded the devil and his agents in their designs against His holy religion. For these artifices created suspicions, and excited curiosity in the Protestants to see and hear him who had aroused so much bitterness and jealousy among their ministers. Hence, old and young followed him in greater numbers than before, which so mortified the parson, that he desisted after one lecture.

CLXII. This happy progress filled with joy the heart of the good Father Gentili, who after only six months' culture of so apparently barren a field, had already gathered into the granary of the Church sixty-nine souls—viz., fifty-seven adults, and twelve children, some of whom—either through the indolence or igno-

rance of parents and ministers, had not yet been baptised. Of one of these converts, the first fruit of Gentili's charity in the Grace Dieu mission, some particulars may here be not undeserving of notice. About two miles off, from the dwelling of the missionary, there lived a protestant young man, aged twenty, who was in the last stage of consumption. Indeed, he was so far gone, that he had more the appearance of a ghost than a human being, and even the doctor affirmed that he had never before seen any one so like a living skeleton. Father Gentili thought that, however unsightly he might be in the eyes of the world, still, in the merciful presence of God, he was, doubtless, worthy of compassion, and destined for eternal life. Almost every day during a month, the pious priest visited and instructed the patient in the Catholic faith. At length, the dying youth abjured error,—embraced the truth—received the sacraments, and, in fine, piously breathed his last sigh in the peace of the Lord. This event Father Gentili looked upon as a signal favour from Heaven; for although the Protestant mother of the deceased was violently fanatical, yet she kept quiet during her son's sickness, and always received the priest with courtesy. But her son had no sooner expired, than, like an absessed person, she fell into transports of rage, and even threatened Father Gentili in her fury, declaring, that before her child became a Catholic, he had been sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ, through the ministry of the methodists, to whose sect the youth once belonged. Finally, nothing could induce her to allow the corpse to be buried in a Catholic cemetery!

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER GENTILI'S COMPASSION FOR THE IGNORANT, AND THE POOR—THE HERETICS BURN HIM IN EFFIGY—THE RESULT OF HIS LABOURS—THE CONVERSION OF AN ANGLICAN MINISTER.

CLXIII. In the midst of these consolations, however, our missionary had his share of those afflictions which are the usual lot of the saints. Having, in the exercise of his ministry, much intercourse with very poor and indigent people, seeing their miseries and hearing their piteous complaints without having it in his power as a poor Religious, except in an inadequate way, to relieve their extreme distress, must have been a continual torment to his sensible heart. In one of his letters to his superior general, he says: "I have not the power which the prince of the Apostles had, when he said to the lame beggar: '*Argentum et Aurum non est mihi: Quod autem habeo, hoc tibi do. In nomine Jesu Christi Nazareni surge et ambula.*' Withal, great as may be the means of assisting the needy and infirm possessed by him, who has the power of working miracles; nevertheless, I dare assert, that the simple gift of healing the sick, were it granted by the Divine mercy, would not suffice, in certain cases, to upraise these poor people from utter destitution—many, after seeking for a livelihood by day and night, cannot get it; and many after finding employment with great difficulty, do not earn enough from day to day to satisfy their hunger. Hence on Sundays and festivals they are

ashamed to appear in Church with their ragged apparel—and thus, they remain in ignorance at home. This is the case with not a few among my converts. Strange to say, there are some in prison for want of a few shillings to pay the poor law tax, because they are themselves so poverty stricken, as to have scarcely bread to eat, or clothes to put on. The good gentleman here does what he can—living with the greatest economy—and depriving himself of every expensive amusement to aid the poor;—he has even recourse to the charity of his friends—but it is all comparatively little for such an indigent multitude.” Father Gentili wished not only for means to feed and clothe the poor, but also to provide them with devout medals, rosaries, and pious books, to keep alive their piety at home, as well as in Church—and also, by similar presents, to attract the children, especially to school and catechism.

CLXIV. Another source of affliction to him was the arrival of summer, when old and young are employed from morning till night in country labour, so that they could not attend either at Church or at School, on those appointed days when the Missionary came. And the distance to Gracedieu was too great for many of them on festival days. So that in the harvest season, he frequently lost the fruit of much previous toil.

CLXIV. Another cause of annoyance was the injurious power wielded by the protestant ministers, who sometimes succeeded in destroying a work it had taken him months to accomplish. They hindered him from getting an assembly room at any cost at Belton. After hiring one for six months at Osgothorpe, their influence over the Landlord prevented a renewal of the lease. In the same village, some of the people, urged on by the furious declamations of the parsons, undertook to frighten the missionary from the place in the following

way. They dressed out a grotesque figure in priestly costume, resembling that which Father Gentili usually wore, and after parading the effigy about for some time, it was contumeliously shot at and set fire too: at length the burning remains were thrown over the bridge into a rivulet, amid yells and shouts of vulgar derision. However, this serio-comic event did not intimidate the good shepherd, for the day after, he went intrepidly alone to the village, much to the surprise and consternation of the busiest actors in the scene, perchance, thinking he had come to menace them with legal vengeance. But on hearing that he treated the matter jokingly, and excused its authors, some were so edified by his forbearance towards his enemies, that their eyes were opened to the truth of the religion which inspired him with such charitable sentiments, and soon became reconciled to the Church and her zealous minister.

CLXV. After this, Father Gentili commenced the custom of going processionally on Sundays and singing the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, from the chapel at Gracedieu all the way to Osgothorpe, where at a certain spot, he used to preach in the open air to a crowd of hearers, who listened with remarkable attention and order. At first he spoke on the necessity of baptism, inveighing against the negligence of those parents, who allow their children to reach manhood, sometimes, without having procured for them this essential blessing. He exhorted them not to overlook this sacred duty—offering to christen the unbaptised at any place or time, without remuneration. Hence many availed themselves of the offer—and brought their children to him for sacramental regeneration. Others kept at home, by the inclemency of the weather, or other causes, he baptised in their own cottages.

CLXVI. In spite of many difficulties in Osgothorpe,

he opened also two schools for Children—one on Sundays—the other on week-days—and for want of a chapel, with the Bishop's leave, he preached at some convenient spot in the open air. But, as a church was necessary for the greater decorum of public worship, he succeeded in obtaining from some Catholic Gentlemen, funds sufficient to erect one at Sheepshead, the principal village. In the mean time, he said mass, and administered the sacraments to the faithful, in an apartment of a poor shoemaker's cottage: the humble owner himself and family were but lately converted. In this squalid and confined place of worship, it was consoling to Father Gentili, to think of primitive Christianity, when Pontiffs and Bishops were obliged to celebrate the august mysteries of religion in the garrets of private houses, or in the caverns and crypts of the Catacombs.

CLXVII. Notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances under which he laboured, the result of his industrious charity and apostolic zeal was far from being insignificant. Sixty-one adults had already abjured their errors—sixty-six children under seven years of age, were baptized for the first time—and twenty others conditionally. At the same time he had the comfort to finish the conversion of an Anglican Clergyman, the Rev. Francis Wackerbarth. This gentleman with another ex-protestant minister, entered a spiritual retreat, under the direction of Father Gentili at Grace Dieu. The meditation of eternal truths in solitary and prayerful retirement, operated wonderfully, by the aid of Divine grace. The case of the new convert was made known to the coadjutor Bishop of the District, Dr. Wiseman, who came to Gracedieu to receive his solemn abjuration, and to give him conditional baptism. The next day, the Prelate also administered to both converts,

the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation. It was doubtless a moving sight to see these two distinguished members of the Anglican clergy, humbling themselves with faithful childlike simplicity, to receive the sacraments from a Catholic Bishop.

CHAPTER X.

A PREDICTION, AND OTHER REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES.

CLXVIII. In the difficult mission confided to his care, God was pleased to reward the zeal of His servant not only by the before-mentioned success, but also to increase public reverence towards him, by some other remarkable events. Simply narrating them as historical facts, recorded in his biographical memoirs, I leave them to be qualified by the competent authority. A few days after his arrival at Gracedieu, Father Gentili paid his first visit to the Cistercian Abbey of St. Bernard in Charnwood forest. On this occasion, he made a prediction to the present Abbot of the monastery—the Very Rev. Father Palmer, who, although far advanced in age, was at that time a mere monk, not even in priestly orders. As Father Gentili was about to enter the carriage, he turned to Father Bernard who accompanied him, and said: “You will one day be a priest, and you will say your first mass on a festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” This prediction was exactly verified, for Father Bernard, some time afterwards, became a priest, and celebrated his first mass on the solemnity of the Assumption.

Father Gentili was once asked to go to Belton, in order to visit there a sick youth, who having previously received some instructions about the Catholic faith, ardently wished to be better informed on the subject. As he could not safely leave his home, owing to terrible epileptic fits, into which he was liable to fall, he was visited by Father Gentili, who exhorted him to place confidence in the intercession of Blessed Mary, the good Mother of the afflicted; and on leaving, he promised to bring with him at his next visit some devout memorial. In the mean time, ignorant of what had occurred, a pious Catholic lady called to visit the poor sick person, and suspended from his neck a medal of the Immaculate Conception. The youth, though still a Protestant, gladly received this religious gift—and had no cause to regret it afterwards; for he was henceforth freed from his horrible infirmity, and was enabled to attend to his laborious out-door employments.

CLXIX. Preaching one day in the market place of Sheepshead, to a large assembly of Protestants, Father Gentili was interrupted by a drunken fellow, who scandalised the by-standers in giving utterance to all sorts of blasphemies against Holy Church. This wretch's impiety did not wholly escape unpunished; for the same day, he dreadfully wounded his own hand, and was thus, during several weeks, in great pain, and hindered from earning his bread. The guilty man himself, it seems, considered it as a manifest chastisement from heaven—for he sent to crave pardon for his fault, and attributed it to his being in a state of intoxication.

CLXX. The following anecdote is still more fearful. At Osgothorpe, a protestant woman, who occupied a room contiguous to the hired chamber in which Father

Gentili was giving instructions, resolved to give him some annoyance. For this purpose she made a large fire, and invited some idlers who happened to be on the road near at hand, to come by her fire side and make merry. The uproar they made was so loud, as to disturb not a little the good missionary and his audience. The woman's rioting, however, was followed the same night by a serious and painful fever, which kept her ill for some months, and then terminated fatally.

CLXX. During the two years that Father Gentili remained at Gracedieu, he never omitted going over to Sheepshead three or four times a week. In the midst of snow and rain he went just the same, and many a time as he was returning late at night, he would slip into some ditch, from which he extricated himself with difficulty. His attendant, a convert from Sheepshead, has related how he never seemed more joyous than when, after a hard day's working, he had a difficult journey home. Often as he walked about the streets of Sheepshead was he insulted, not only by words, but by having the most disgusting things thrown after him. One day, he came into the house of a Catholic, with his cassock (for he wore the ecclesiastical dress the whole time he was at Gracedieu) covered from top to bottom with every sort of filth. Upon the poor woman expressing her regret that he should have been so shamefully treated, he answered smiling: "Oh this is nothing in comparison of what my Saviour suffered for me, I could most willingly lay down my life for His honour, and should consider myself too happy to do it." I may conclude this chapter by observing that Father Gentili did not limit exclusively to the Gracedieu mission the aid of his services. Thus, for instance, he went to preach at the opening of our Lady's Church in Staffordshire. At another time, at the Bishop's re-

quest, he went to Oscott College, to give spiritual exercises to the candidates for Holy Orders.

CHAPTER XI.

FATHER GENTILI UNDERTAKES THE MISSION AT LOUGHBOROUGH—HIS LABOURS AND SUCCESSES IN THIS NEW FIELD.

CLXXI. When Father Gentili undertook alone the care of souls at Gracedieu, it was with the sanguine hope that ere long a small house might be formed in the neighbourhood for the reception of novices belonging to the Institute of Charity. After trying various unsuccessful plans, the Bishop, through the good offices of Mr. Phillipps, offered to the Institute the Mission House at Loughborough. This episcopal offer was willingly acceded to by the Heads of the Institute, and the Rev. J. B. Pagani, in May, 1841, left Prior Park, with a few religious companions, destined to form the nucleus of a new community. The year after, however, the aid of Father Pagani, and some of his priestly colleagues, as professors, were urgently requested by the Bishop, at Oscott College; on which account it was decided to transfer Father Gentili from Gracedieu to Loughborough. He came to his new destination in October, 1842, in order to cultivate a larger vineyard, with two other priests to assist him in the work. He commenced by making an improved and methodical arrangement for the services. In Loughborough and at Sheephead on all Sundays and festal days,

the Divine services were celebrated with solemnity, morning and evening. In the poor chapel at Barrow, for want of proper Church furniture, the service was at first limited to instructions for the people—and the singing of devout hymns; but they, also, were soon enabled to have full services. During the week, that is to say on Wednesdays—there was a discourse at Sheepshead—and a similar sermon at Loughborough, on Thursdays, with Benediction. Besides, attention was to be paid to Sunday schools in all the three before-mentioned places. The children were taught how to read and write, and to learn their catechism. The boys and girls, clothed in uniform, charitably provided for them, went processionally through the public streets, from their respective schools, to the chapel, singing along the way the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus: on their return, they sung the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. About Christmas tide, Father Gentili introduced the Roman custom of publicly examining the pupils in catechism. The experiment gave so much satisfaction, that the number of learners was soon after considerably increased. The major part of the parents being protestants, it was gratifying to see them also coming to the school to hear their children answer, and by that means getting to know the doctrines of the true faith. Another, perhaps, still more pleasing and impressive scene, took place at Sheepshead, when prizes were distributed to the most diligent among the school-children. As the chapel was not deemed sufficiently spacious for the concourse of people, the meeting was held one fine day in an ample meadow. The premiums awarded to successful competitors—consisted of books, pictures, and articles of clothing.

CLXVI. As ignorance is one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of true religion among the poor, Father

Gentili laboured hard, and succeeded in improving the Catholic school for boys and girls at Loughborough. The school for boys was intrusted to a member of the Institute of Charity, and managed according to the method of the brothers of Christian doctrine;—the school for girls was confided to the sisters of Providence, who had been recently, and for the first time, introduced into this country from Italy, by Father Pagani, aided by the generous piety of the late Dowager Lady Arundel. This illustrious Matron, after the demise of her husband in Rome, devoted herself more than ever to good works; thus preparing herself for that reward, exceeding great, which we doubt not she has since received in heaven.

CLXXIII. It may, however, be unhesitatingly affirmed, that the most beneficial of Father Gentili's efforts for the spiritual advantage of Loughborough's inhabitants, was the course of religious exercises given in the chapel to the public, during eight consecutive days. On the last day, the Vicar Apostolic of the Yorkshire District, Bishop Briggs, was present, and imparted to the people, Benediction, with the Most Holy Sacrament. Besides the number of Catholics who were induced to reform their lives on this occasion, sixty-three protestants were received into the Church. As the exercises had done so much good in Loughborough, Father Gentili wished to extend the same advantages to Sheepshead. Here also a great change was operated for the better, and various conversions took place. Indeed, so strong was the desire to hear the missionaries, that at the end of the week, a deputation waited upon them to request they would kindly prolong the exercises for a few days more.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER GENTILI IS INVITED TO A TEMPERANCE MEETING—
HIS DISCUSSION WITH A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

CLXXIV. Father Gentili and his colleagues introduced both into Loughborough and Sheepshead, ramifications of the well known temperance society. In the former place about one hundred joined—and half the number in the latter. At one of the annual meetings of this association, into which persons of all religious persuasions were admitted, Dr. Gentili was invited to attend—and in compliance with the protestant Chairman's request, he made a speech to the assembly. The previous speaker had commenced by observing that so many members of various creeds had met together to promote the noble cause of temperance, it augured well for their being all one day united in the possession of the same true faith. Father Gentili seized this idea of unanimity in the cause of virtue and truth, as a providential suggestion for guiding them to religious concord, and endeavoured to shape his discourse into an ample development of this principle, as may be seen from the following outline: "All good men," he remarked, "must take pleasure in seeing persons of every rank, age, sex, and condition, throughout the kingdom, promoting in public and in private, one of the cardinal virtues, viz. temperance. It was to be hoped that men who agreed together on this important point, would also soon feel the necessity of being united in other serious matters, about which there existed differences of opinion, but

which at the same time were essential to man's temporal and eternal felicity. A God of infinite love had provided means for this union of mankind; but Satan had done much to render men disunited—hateful—and injurious to one another. For this end it was that the common enemy, after the universal deluge, availed himself of the involuntary intemperance of Noah, to occasion discord in the human family; for the patriarch, with just and prophetic rigour, pronounced a malediction on Cham's descendants, and contrariwise, a blessing on the posterity of his brethren; whence arose an interminable warfare between the fraternal races. On the other hand, in the fulness of time, as the precursor of His only Son, the Saviour of the world, God sent a singular man, who by celestial command, abstaining from wine and strong drinks, and preaching more by example than by word, mortification and temperance, prepared mankind for union under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, in the profession of the same faith and law of charity. Wherefore, if in this country, the Lord has raised up an extraordinary man (Father Mathew), who was then attracting thousands and thousands to his scriptural flag of temperance—that must be a manifest sign that God was preparing to impart some great blessing to the people. It was known to all that the population of Great Britain was tormented and oppressed by many evils, and that the principal, if not the only cause of the physical, moral, and intellectual suffering of multitudes, was religious discord. The well disposed should therefore rejoice, that temperance was rapidly aiding to unite men together, and might thus gradually prove the means of putting a stop to religious dissensions. This yearning after unity was expressed in the publications daily issuing from the press in England, especially in those

works written by Anglican and sectarian ministers; and was manifested, also, by the prayers to God of both Catholics and Protestants, who sighed after this much desired union."

CLXXV. After speaking in this sense for about an hour, Dr. Gentili sat down amid much applause. The Chairman then proposed a vote of thanks to the orator for his discourse; but this was opposed by a dissenting minister present (belonging to the sect of Independents), who said that the only praiseworthy thing in Dr. Gentili's speech was the use he made of the Bible; as for the rest, in a protestant assembly, his conscience would not allow him to return thanks to a speaker, who, instead of keeping exclusively to the subject of temperance, had insidiously tried to instil popish doctrines into the minds of his auditors. In this strain, with violent gesture and language, the minister went on endeavouring to weaken the effect produced by the Catholic missionary: and at length he worked himself into such a passion, that he almost choked his utterance. The minister's indecorous attack excited the surprise and displeasure of the meeting, and especially of the Chairman, who tried more than once to call him to order, but in vain, until he had exhausted his fury.

CLXXVI. All now turned their eyes towards Dr. Gentili, to see the effect it might have had upon him. In fact, he felt at first, as he afterwards acknowledged, rather irritated, and somewhat inclined to repay the minister with his own coin; but recollecting the dignified mildness becoming those whom Christ sends as sheep among wolves, he quietly asked leave to say a few words in reply. This being granted, he briefly recapitulated the Chairman's words at the commencement of the meeting, and which served him as the theme of his own harangue. Wherefore he contended

that he had scrupulously adhered to the subject proposed for discussion, as he always did, whenever he had the honour to address them in public. This explanation disconcerted the minister, who having arrived late, had not heard a syllable of the Chairman's speech, and in his fanatical zeal was far from imagining it to be the very topic Dr. Gentili had more amply developed. Encouraged by the cheers of the meeting, Dr. Gentili continued his remarks by saying, that as Biblical arguments were not unpalatable to the minister, he begged to inform him that the discourse He found so much fault with, was a commentary on that gospel sentence, "Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur." As to the vote of thanks proposed by the courtesy of the Chairman, at the same time that he was grateful, he wished them to know that he sought not to win applause, but to promote the welfare of his brother man, the cause of truth, and the glory of God, from whom alone he hoped for reward. In fine, they might perceive that the minister's bitter taunts had not made him angry, or diminished his affection for any one present, and that if it was agreeable to the majority, he would be as willing as ever to assist them at future meetings.

CLXXVII. Every body seemed pleased with the temper and discretion of this defence, if we except, perhaps, the independent minister, who, however made a sort of apology for his objectionable deportment. Then Dr. Gentili came forward, and shook hands with his retracting opponent, and the assembly was dissolved amid great cheering. A few persons, however, still remained behind, with Dr. Gentili and the minister, in friendly conversation, which soon turned upon religious topics. While the minister was warmly insisting that faith was not to be placed in any thing unread in the

Bible, a countryman, who happened to be listening to the discussion, pointed to a Bible that was near at hand and said, "Well then, Sir, shew me, if you can, in the Scriptures, the word 'Independent,' and then I'll believe in you." This frank and unexpected nonplus annoyed the minister not a little, and served to keep up the hilarity of the company on their way home.

CHAPTER XIII.

FATHER GENTILI CONCILIATES THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE ENGLISH PRELATES TOWARDS THE INSTITUTE—HIS GOOD WORKS AT LOUGHBOROUGH—THE CONVERSION OF AN ANGLICAN GENTLEMAN—SPIRITUAL RETREATS GIVEN IN VARIOUS PLACES, ETC.

CLXXVIII. Father Gentili's successful labours in the mission of Gracedieu and Loughborough, by degrees, had earned for the Institute of Charity, the esteem and affection of the good in general, and of the ecclesiastical authorities in particular. Most of the English prelates at this time deigned to enter into correspondence with Father Gentili and his companions, and to honour them with visits at their house in Loughborough. These were not idle compliments, but had for their object to elicit information respecting the new Institute, which had been recently sanctioned by the Apostolic See, as well adapted to the wants of the present age, and therefore highly recommended to the notice of all the Bishops of Christendom. The English prelates were inquisitive about the origin, advance-

ment, and rules of this new Religious Order. They wished to see with their own eyes how it answered practically, and to learn how they might avail themselves of its members for the spiritual profit of souls confided by God to their care. Some remained in the house to go through a course of spiritual exercises, under Father Gentili's direction. Being satisfied with these experiments, some asked to be ascribed to the Institutes as tertiaries—and requested that some priests of the Order might be sent to give extraordinary missions to the Clergy, people, and religious, in their respective dioceses, and also to undertake fixed parochial offices.

CLXXIX. In fact, Father Gentili's memoirs record, how, in 1843 and the following year, he commenced this apostolic work, which was henceforth not restricted to any particular Vicariate in England, but extended also to Ireland's metropolis, where, as we shall narrate in due time, his exertions and his life finally terminated. In this, his new career, it will not be possible to particularise very minutely, the efforts of his zeal, we must therefore be content with little more than a nomenclature of the various places where he exercised his special ministry. But before we accompany him in his pilgrimages, it may be as well to notice a few more of the good works he accomplished while superior of the Mission house at Loughborough. His usual occupation at home was to direct, himself, the course of spiritual exercises for whoever came to make a retreat—whether Bishop, Priest, religious, or layman. He was not only skilful in the discharge of this office, but was also very expert in drawing gently into a religious retreat, those who had no previous notion of it. A case of this kind happened in September, 1843. One of the Rev. Dr. Newman's friends, coming from Oxford, called on Father Gentili to pay a short visit. Now

this gentleman, at first, had no intention of stopping more than a few hours at Loughborough, but he was induced by his host to remain till the morrow. Then he was persuaded to go in his company to see the neighbouring Cistercian Abbey at St. Bernard's Mount, and after that, to the new Church of St. Winefride at Sheepshead. During these excursions, he acquired sufficient influence over his devout Anglican companion to convince him how useful the spiritual exercises would prove to his soul. Father Gentili's offers of service were accepted, and the result was, that his guest happily abjured all Protestant errors, and embraced the Catholic faith not only; but also became a professed member and Priest of the Institute of Charity.

CLXXX. In 1843, also, Father Gentili had the consolation to help in the settlement of a regular noviciate for the Sisters of Providence at Loughborough, and also that of another similar establishment for the Fathers of Charity at Ratcliffe. About the same time also, the Bishop of the Midland District, as a mark of his esteem, appointed Father Gentili Rural Dean of the Clergy at the Leicester conferences. But deeming it incompatible with his other duties, he obtained leave of his Lordship to be exonerated from this honourable office.

CLXXXI. Before the end of the year 1844, Father Gentili went successively to Derby, Liverpool, Coventry, and Leicester, to preach in behalf of the Schools for poor Catholic children in these cities. In the two former, invitations came from the Benedictines, and in the last named town, from the Dominicans. The good missionary rejoiced at these opportunities of cementing a mutual benevolence between evangelical workmen of different religious Orders, and of strengthening their union in the common bond of faith and charity.

Later, he went to give the spiritual exercises to the secular clergy of the York and Northern districts. The two Vicars Apostolic, Bishops Mostyn and Briggs, edifyingly assisted at the whole retreat, which gave so much satisfaction, that Father Gentili was asked to repeat the same course the following year. Before leaving York, he also gave the spiritual exercises to a convent of Nuns in that city.

CLXXXII. At Whitwick, he preached a course of Sermons on the great truths of Religion, in the open air, preparatory to the festival of the Holy Cross. To leave a lasting memorial of the event, he obtained the Bishop's leave to bless a large crucifix, and then erected it on a rocky eminence near at hand. At the foot of this cross, his fervid and pious appeals to a large concourse of spectators, made a deep and efficacious impression. In the month of September, Father Gentili and his Missionary colleague Father Furlong, were invited to Alton Towers, by the munificent Earl of Shrewsbury, in order to preach the usual course of exercises to the Catholics on his estate. Thence they went to Liverpool, Bambury, and Grantham, promoting the great spiritual advantage of both Catholics and protestants, who came to hear them. To do away with some people's pretext of not being able to attend the sermons, on account of their daily work—the missionaries commenced prayers in church at a very early hour, preaching twice in the morning—and twice in the evening. The intermediate time they devoted to others who had more leisure, and to the school children, in order to prepare them for the sacraments. Great was the affluence of all classes, so that the Priests were some days unable to find time to say Mass and to recite the Divine office, being kept constantly engaged in the confessional till beyond midnight. Some poor penitents waited for

their turn patiently from morning till night, some perhaps not having approached the tribunal of penance before, during the space of ten or twenty years. Not to mention the number of converted sinners admitted to the sacraments, the missionaries, in various places, received the abjuration of eighty-three protestant adults, and conferred baptism on fifty-seven infants. This religious fervour was not a mere *ignis fatuus*, which vanished with the disappearance of the missionaries, for meeting with the resident priest of Bambury some months after the public mission, Father Gentili was assured by him that the great increase in weekly sacramental communions still continued.

CLXXXIII. In addition to the beforementioned, Father Gentili, partly with the assistance of Father Furlong, and partly by himself, directed, as he had done the preceding year, the spiritual retreat for the Clergy in the Yorkshire and Northern districts; he did the same afterwards for the students of Ushaw College; whence, on a similar errand he proceeded to conventual communities at York, Nottingham, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Loughborough. In 1845, he presided, for the first time, at the request of Bishop Griffiths, over the annual retreat of the clergy at St. Edmund's college, in the London District. On this occasion, an Anglican clergyman was received into the true church. After the missionary's departure, the ecclesiastics who had profited by his instructions, spontaneously collected £20, which they sent to Father Gentili as a proof of their gratitude, as well as a small aid to the building fund of Ratchliffe College, at that time in course of erection.

CHAPTER XIV.

FATHER GENTILI FALLS INTO A SERIOUS ERROR—HIS READY
AND MOST EDIFYING REPENTANCE—CORRESPONDENCE ON
THE SUBJECT.

CLXXXIV. Considering the success which had hitherto attended his missionary enterprises, Father Gentili's temperament must have been superhuman, had it been proof against temptation to some vain glory and self complacency. Withal, God, who affectionately watched His servant in the peril to which he was exposed, provided an antidote for the venomous bite of the proud serpent, by permitting Gentili to fall into a grievous error, but from which he was immediately upraised, more humble, pure, and contrite than before. The case happened thus. The superior of the Institute in England, the Rev. Father Pagani, with the sanction of the Bishop, had undertaken to provide for a very important mission in Birmingham, and all that remained to be done was to send the appointed labourers from Loughborough.

But apprehensive that this undertaking might check the work of extraordinary missions, which he deemed of paramount importance, not to mention his other fears, and deceived by the appearances of a greater good, Father Gentili so warmly opposed the Birmingham negotiation, that it miscarried, much to the displeasure of his superiors, and not a little also to their discredit. To justify his own conduct in this affair, he wrote a long letter to the Father General. This wise

superior, who soon perceived his correspondent's mistake, pointed it out to him in a reply of which we give the version entire.

CLXXXV. ~I have received your letter of the 3rd April, (1844) in which, for the discharge of your conscience, you apprise me of what you have said and done relative to the missionary affair at Birmingham, in order that I may give you a due penitential reprimand, in case I find you faulty. Ah, my dear friend, to my great grief and infinite sorrow, I do find fault with you indeed. The substance of your letter is this, that, for the good of the Institute in England, you have managed to defeat the completed plan of a work already arranged by your superior. Now, pray tell me, do you perchance admit the principle, that subordinates may bring about the failure of their superior's regularly concerted operations, when they opine them to be injurious to the society to which they belong? If you reflect on this principle, you must see that it contains the destruction of religious obedience—the only basis of true virtue, and without which holiness becomes illusory and ungodly, and there can be no well-grounded hope that the Lord will prosper the Institute. Now, tell me, have you not acted according to this destructive principle? How could your conscience suggest such a war against the work of your superior? You say (perhaps) to save the Institute from a threatened misfortune. Had you the authority? Were you charged therewith by a legitimate commission from God? Why did you not hold firmly the principle of faith, that he who obeys does not err, and that he who submits, without leaving his own sphere, is assured of God's assistance? Does not the Holy Ghost say, *non obediens loquetur victorias*? How much greater good would you not have done the Institute, by placing

trust in obedience—a virtue so dear to the Lord, and by steadfastly believing that in this way God would not fail to reward you, and bless the Institute, and draw good out of evil, even supposing the superior had made a mistake. How deplorable, then, is the illusion! But herein does not consist the whole of your guilt. To succeed in what was not your business, not satisfied with openly thwarting your superior's judgment, you resort to blameworthy means for succeeding in your intent, disapproving of what your superior had concluded with respectable parties, diminishing thereby his credit and authority, and, while worthy of much esteem, making him appear to be a man of little prudence! Oh God! Who would have thought that to such a degree Satan could have deluded you, '*sub specie boni*?' I greatly deplore the real injury you have done to the Institute by this bad example; and I grieve that you have become the instrument of discord, while you ought to be the centre of union—the model of perfect obedience, and the cement of fraternal charity. Ah! my dear brother, open your eyes to the imprudence committed, and to the violation of the virtue and spirit of your vow. Ask, therefore, pardon of God, and promise Him a true amendment. I desire you not to appear holy in the eyes of man, as this often imperils a man's eternal salvation; but rather to be truly a saint in the sight of God. Withal, you will never attain to holiness, if you do not make it consist in a total abnegation of your own judgment, and in a perfect obedience to your superiors. Do then, my dear friend, afford me the consolation of seeing you re-enter yourself, and draw profit from my words, which are a warning which God sends you, through my unworthy medium. Promise me in writing that you will never fall again into errors of a similar nature, that you will

do nothing more unknown to, or against the will of your superiors, and that, to carry out your own views, you will not rely for support on the influence of others out of the Institute. In fine, write to me in such a manner as to prove that your error, though serious and imprudent, was accidental and transitory. Renounce for ever your own will to follow that of God; then shall I bless the Lord for having enlightened you, and entertain the hope of your being a worthy son of the Institute, which has for its foundation obedience, 'usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.'"

CLXXXVI. The profound impression which this epistle made upon Father Gentili's mind, may be inferred from the humble letters which he wrote, one after the other, to the superior general. To avoid prolixity, the following extracts may suffice. In that of the 23rd April, he says: "This morning I received your most esteemed letter of the 13th instant. After having profoundly humbled myself before God, in consequence of the many grievous faults which you have pointed out, and the truth of which I hesitate not to avow, I hasten to answer it. I assure you, my dear Father, that I did not act upon the principle that subjects may counteract the operations of their superiors, even when disadvantageous to the Institute. This idea did not occur to me, neither if it had occurred would I have adopted it; but I let the devil deceive me with the idea that you would not permit the execution of that treaty had you known our actual circumstances; if I had had time to write to you, I should not have spoken to any one on the subject. I do not advance this as an excuse, for I acknowledge myself as culpable as you judge me to be; but only to assure you, that the principle which you ascribe to me, has not been, nor ever shall be mine, with the help of the Lord. In the mean-

time, I promise before God and your paternity, even were it to cost me my death, that I shall never suffer myself, in a similar way, to be deluded again. Your mildly written letter is to me a no light penance, weightier, perhaps, than any other you could impose upon me. The thought of having violated the virtue and spirit of that holy obedience promised in my vows to God, is an affliction impossible for me to express, and what adds to its gravity is, that my deficiency never entered my mind till this morning, as my intention always was to obey. But now I am aware of my wretched fall. My dear Father, the semblance of sanctity I estimate as nothing; but a true saint I really wish to become, and I well know that without absolute abnegation, and profound humility, sanctification cannot be obtained. This I ardently desire, but not to place myself in opposition to my superiors; and believe me, dear Father, that I have failed not in wishing to oppose them, but through weakness, pusillanimity, and want of confidence in God, feeling myself unequal to the difficulties to be encountered in assuming that new enterprise. More than once I have had a mind to write to your paternity, requesting to be exonerated from the charge of superior over the mission, and the house at Loughborough, feeling myself every day more incompetent, and wishing to retire to the lowest and most laborious of our missions. But I refrained, as the pains and humiliations to which I was exposed were, it seemed, better adapted to my continual and perfect abnegation. Now, however, it seems evident that I have not the talents necessary for the performance of two such important charges; wherefore I earnestly beg of you to grant my solicitation. I have already said that your mildly written letter was to me a hard penance, though I deserved a correction much more severe, and worded

so as to make me tremble. Nevertheless, I hope you will inflict a condign penance for that one, not only, but also for my many grievous mistakes, &c."

After the lapse of two days, before he had received any answer, he penned, as an appendix to the preceding letter, the following: "Pardon me, if in the state of depression I am labouring under, I so soon write to you again. Neither yesterday, nor to-day, have I dared to celebrate mass. I have not been able to preach; I can scarcely pray, and am good for nothing. I am always fixed in the thought of the evil which I have done to the Institute, and to my own soul. This idea wakens me in the morning—accompanies me during the day, and leaves me helpless. Therefore I beg of you to tell me if I have committed a grievous sin against the vow of obedience, as I cannot discover the depth of my conscience, and this makes me still more fearful, &c."

CLXXXVII. To console him, the superior general wrote a most affectionate letter, commencing with these words: "*Filioli mei, hæc seribo vobis ut non peccetis; sed etsi quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud patrem Jesum Christum justum, et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris, non pro nostris autem tantum, sed etiam pro totius mundi.*" (1 Joan. ii.) He then continued: "Your dear letter has withdrawn a heavy burthen from my heart. For what had happened I was truly afflicted, but now I am fully comforted. Your promises to me are as true balm. To hear that you are more than ever disposed to die rather than disobey, is all of what is most excellent that I can desire of you, but I certainly wish for, and expect nothing less. O blessed simplicity of obedience—which is the same as simplicity of faith; it is the practical faith to which may be applied these words of Christ:

Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt! O blessed abnegation of one's own judgment, which obtains blessings for our Institute, and changes the evil, even by superiors inadvertently done, into good. 'Talibus hostiis promeretur Deus.' Yes, my very dear friend, by this means we shall arrive at the true justice and holiness desired by us. Justus enim meus ex fide vivit. Wherefore I embrace you tenderly in the charity of the Lord, and am grateful for the consolation afforded me; I require from you no other penance, while the sincere sentiments expressed in your letter, are by me valued more than any penance. Let us have an upright intention. Let us trample self-love under foot; and even when affairs get on well, let us sincerely seek contempt for ourselves, and give glory and honour to God alone. Our defects must not discourage us, because we have a merciful Lord who can, and will free us from them if we ardently pray: 'cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despiciet, &c.'"

To this kind letter Father Gentili was impelled to reply as follows: "Replete with confusion, sorrow, and lowliness, I thank you for your letter dated the third day of the beautiful month of Mary. This letter has produced on me an effect not dissimilar to that made by our Saviour's glance on St. Peter, and if you inflict on me no penance for my unfaithfulness, I must impose one on myself, and especially repair my error by perfect obedience. I now renew the promises made in my previous letters; and I trust, by the intercession of my most sweet mother Mary, that God will grant me grace never to violate them, and henceforth also to begin a new spiritual life of true humility and perfect abnegation. You have ever been to me as a guardian angel sent by the Lord, shortly after my conversion, to show me the way in which I should walk. The forgiveness,

which you impart with so much charity, is for me an assurance that God will also pardon, nay, has already pardoned, my grievous fault. I think that Julius would have obtained mercy had he humbled himself before Jesus Christ, and implored the aid of His divine mother. At present we are in the month of Mary, and I shall place my confidence in her who has never abandoned, and I hope never will forsake me. Already, some days before the arrival of your letter, she had restored serenity to my troubled mind. Now, I thank God for all the anxiety I have experienced, as I trust I shall never more forget my duty."

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CONTAINS A NARRATIVE OF FATHER GENTILI'S LIFE FROM
THE PERIOD OF HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE OFFICE OF
ITINERANT MISSIONARY UNTIL HIS DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

REASONS FOR APPOINTING FATHER GENTILI AND HIS
COLLEAGUE, FATHER FURLONG, TO BE ITINERANT MISSION-
ARIES—THEIR GENERAL MODE OF ACTING.

CLXXXIX. In the year 1845, Father Gentili was exonerated from the care of souls in a fixed mission, and was appointed with another companion, exclusively to the office of Itinerant Missionary. The continual and increasing demand for his services, by episcopal, conventual, and other authorities, at length persuaded the superiors of the Institute, that these extraordinary occupations were incompatible with his ministry as the House-Rector and Incumbent at Loughborough, as he could not attend with exactitude to engagements abroad without injury to affairs at home. The expe-

rience of twelve months had shown, that oftentimes Catholics and Protestants, of high and low degree, came to call on Father Gentili at Loughborough, on important business, and hearing that he was absent, they complained, not altogether unreasonably, of being disappointed, although there were other priests who might and were ready to supply his place; but those who from his fame for piety and eloquence were inspired with confidence in him, ordinarily wished to speak with him and no other. Moreover, the local upholders of heresy made inroads into the sheepfold when the shepherd was away. Thus it happened at Loughborough, where the jealous parsons, irritated by the prosperity of the Catholic mission, studied various means to check its progress, by spreading defamatory tracts, and employing spies to watch the movements of the Catholic priests; so that, as soon as any one of the latter came out of a house, measures were taken to counteract whatever good he might have there effected. Sometimes the unblushing emissary of some fanatical association was invited to repeat in public a tissue of oft-refuted calumnies and lies against God's Church and her ministers. They sought also to lure the school-children, by promising money, clothes, and protection, to them and their parents, if they would but adhere to Protestantism. All these reasons evidently proved the need of a pastor constantly dwelling in the midst of his flock, to shield them from the attacks of wolves in sheep's clothing.

CXC. On the other hand, much importance was deservedly attached to the extraordinary missions, which, by the bishops, and the good people in general, were considered most efficacious means for reforming the lives of Catholics not only, but also for converting the Protestants to the true faith. On which account, in

compliance with the wishes of some prelates, the Superiors of the Institute resolved to set apart two of its worthiest priests, with the title of Itinerant Missionaries, who, in imitation of Christ and His apostles, were to be exclusively employed in travelling from one place to another to which they were invited, and there to preach the word of God, according to the method in use among the popular missionaries in Italy. Father Gentili and Father Furlong were not only the first members of the Institute, but also the very first evangelical workmen, whether native or foreign, ever deputed legitimately to that high office, since England separated from the Catholic Church. Although at the commencement, the novelty of the enterprise publicly excited some sectarian fury and noise, still, through the divine mercy, the work proceeded with such marvellous success, as to make the virtuous very thankful to God.

CXCI. While succinctly narrating in chronological order Father Gentili's labours in this new apostleship, I foresee that the reader will not, perchance, feel an interest like unto that which is excited by a continual variety in the events described, even when he is not tempted to ennui by a repetition of nearly the same things, viz.: church meetings, sermons, conversions, communions, and similar sacred functions. However, I pray the pious reader to consider, by the light of faith and reason, what I am about to unfold, if he wishes not to think slightly of God's blessings and singular mercies to sinners in this generation. Let him then beforehand reflect, that the marvels of Divine Grace about to be narrated did not take place among a chosen people in a Catholic land, but in a nation horribly disfigured by schism, heresy, and immorality, and where many deep-rooted prejudices, and anti-Catholic

feelings predominate in the great bulk of the population, where Christ's few scattered sheep are surrounded by an immense Protestant majority, to which the sovereign, the great officers of state, the universities, and most of the wealthy landlords, belong. Add to this the vigorous antagonism of numberless sects against the progress of Catholicism. He who dispassionately considers all these adverse circumstances, must admit, that the conversion of a few individuals in a country thus situate is a greater wonder than the reformation of many sinners in more favoured lands. Moreover, if he calculates the frequent occurrence of these conversions in the different localities to which our missionaries announced the awful truths of religion, he will, doubtless, feel moved with the prophet to exclaim: "*Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.*"

CXCII. To avoid wearisome repetitions, it may be as well here, once for all, to state the usual method or order of a public mission, leaving exceptional cases for future notice. The sacred functions on the appointed day were often commenced by the bishop, or his coadjutor, in person, who after the solemn mass, addressed to the congregation a sermon relative to the nature and object of the spiritual exercises of which they were invited daily to avail themselves during the course; the missionaries, then, at stated hours, alternatively preached, so that, between them both, during the day, four or five discourses were given, of an hour's duration each. The subjects treated were the principal doctrines of the gospel dogmatically and morally viewed. One of the speakers undertook the development of the mysteries of redemption, and the four last things—death, judgment, hell, heaven; and the other expounded the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, deducing therefrom the highly

responsible duties of every christian. The existence and justice of an Almighty Judge; man's origin, fall, and destiny; the malice of sin; the torments of hell; the certainty of death; the awfully strict account mortals will have to render in another world; the incarnation of a Divine Saviour; his death and resurrection; the beatific vision reserved everlastingly for the penitent as well as the innocent. All these truths eloquently explained at the foot of God's altar, in the presence sometimes of prelates, dignitaries of the Church, and before a crowded auditory, by a divinely commissioned sacerdotal orator, whose example was as impressive as his words, all these, I say, could not but produce in many a lively emotion, awaken from their lethargy the most hardened sinners, and reconcile more than one repentant child to his offended Father.

CXCIII. One of the principal things at which the missionaries aimed, was to instruct their hearers how to free themselves from sin, to overcome temptations to vice, and to persevere in virtue. To accomplish this important object, the most efficacious means was obviously the powerful grace to be derived from a worthy use of the sacraments of penance and the holy Eucharist, which formed the closing scene, or crown, as it were, of the mission. Hence, to the administration of the sacrament of penance, especially, the two missionaries devoted almost the whole time that intervened between their sermons. So great, usually, was the concourse of people to their confessionals, that they were kept occupied during eight or ten hours a day. It sometimes happened, even, that the confessors remained in church, hearing confessions, all night long, without leisure to say Mass, to recite the Divine Office, to take any repose, or even to take bodily nourishment, except in a hasty manner. The labours of the mission-

aries were not interrupted, but only varied, for weeks and months together. They had to attend to the preparatory training of children for their first communion, to remove the difficulties of postulants for admission into the Catholic Church, to restore peace to disunited families, and factions in discord, to legalise the cohabitation of certain parties, and to promote works of education and piety. In fine, among other devotional observances, they introduced processions, evening Benediction, with the most holy Sacrament, and the forty hours' prayer during its exposition. In the next chapter we shall enumerate the principal towns visited by the missionaries, with some other particulars.

CHAPTER II.

MISSIONS AT HULL, LEEDS, SHEFFIELD, LEAMINGTON, NEWPORT, HUDDERSFIELD, BRADFORD, AND COVENTRY.

CXCIV. From February to June, in the year 1845, Father Gentili and his colleague successively gave missions for ten or fifteen days together, in the cities of Hull, Leeds, Sheffield, Leamington, Newport, Huddersfield, Bradford, and Coventry. The general result of these missions may be inferred partly from one of Father Gentili's own letters to the Father General of the Institute, in which he writes thus: "It would be difficult to describe all that God deigns to operate on these missions; nevertheless, to give due glory to Him, I may tell you, that hundreds and thousands of sinners, who had entirely abandoned the prac-

tice of our holy religion, and had remained for years without confession and communion, have been reconciled to God; and that, a great number of young and old persons, born of Catholic parents, have approached the sacraments for the first time; and that many who were living sinfully together, have either separated or got married; some have restored ill-gotten goods, others have given up pernicious books; many who for some time past were at enmity with each other, and not even upon speaking terms, have asked and obtained mutual forgiveness. Although the two missionaries, without taking time either to say Mass or Office, have been engaged in the confessionals till two or three hours past midnight, they have been obliged to ask assistance from the neighbouring priests in hearing the confessions of such a multitude of penitents, and in forming a sort of guard, or clerical police, to check any possible disorder from the pressure of the crowd; for it has often happened, to see the church so crammed with people as to make it difficult to effect an entrance; of those who succeeded, some were kept either standing or seated for several hours of the day or night, without being able to move, while waiting for their turn to confess. On the day of general communion, for which preparation was made, (by appropriate meditations and hymns,) the number that presented themselves at the Eucharistic table was so great, that it was puzzling to guess from whence they all came. In particular at Sheffield, the bishop who came to celebrate Mass was consoled to see so large a number prepared for communion, for besides those who already filled the church, several were humbly prostrate on the steps outside, while in ordinary times, even on great festal days, the congregation of old and young, Protestant and Catholic together, did not fill more than one half the church.

The faithful offered so many wax candles, that the altar on which the most holy Sacrament was publicly exposed for three days, was as splendidly illumined as is usual in Rome and Italy on similar occasions."

CXCV. The subject on which Father Gentili wrote to Father Rosmini, is corroborated by two other letters inserted in the "Tablet" about that time:

"THE PREACHING OF THE MISSIONS AT LEEDS.

"To the Editor of the Tablet.

"DEAR SIR,

"The attention of your readers was called last week to the preaching of the missions by that zealous order of men, the Fathers of Charity. Too much praise cannot be given to their noble efforts to revive the spirit of religion in this unhappy country. I, for one, anticipate the most glorious results from their labours, after witnessing for the last fortnight the success of their preaching to the largest congregation in Yorkshire. The mission had been announced and its object explained to the Leeds Catholics a month before it took place, and its benefits were again further unfolded in an impressive sermon by the good Bishop of the district, the Right Rev. Dr. Briggs, on the Sunday of the opening of the mission—the first Sunday of Lent. A crowded congregation assembled in the evening in St. Anne's church, to learn the terms of the sacred embassy brought by the anxiously expected missionaries, the Rev. Dr. Gentili, and the Rev. F. Furlong, nor were they disappointed. The earnest and fervid eloquence of the preachers, their bold and withering castigation of vice in every rank of life, the charms in which they set forth the beauty and lustre of virtue, insisting upon the life of Christ as the indis-

pensable rule of every christian, all engaged for them a breathless attention, and caused such a feverish emotion in every breast, from a sense of their vast shortcomings, that the interest never seemed to abate during the whole succeeding fortnight. It certainly was a cheering spectacle, to behold a church of spacious dimensions filled to the very threshold, night after night, by a dense mass of people, who listened with the most intense interest to the thrilling truths of religion, as they came clothed with fire from the burning lips of these zealous and energetic men, piercing, as they did, every hidden corner of the heart, and subduing the stubborn spirit of the most obstinate sinner. Scarcely was there a single listener, man or woman, who did not feel himself borne, as it were, irresistibly, into the stream of penitents hastening to the confessionals, and though it was usual to wait eight or ten hours before they could reach the feet of the priest, they were well contented to submit to such a trifling inconvenience in order to disencumber their consciences of what they now felt to be a heavy and insupportable burden. The different confessionals, always four, and sometimes six, were thronged from six o'clock in the morning until twelve at night. Oh, that these missions were given through the length and breadth of the land, what a different tone of Catholic feeling might we expect to see produced, and how many of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" reclaimed! Is not this the right way to commence the conversion of England, setting first 'our own house in order,' and practising the sterner maxims of the Gospel ourselves, ere we pretend to lure others into the fold of Christ? The mission had continued eight days, when a fresh attraction was given to it by the commencement of the Forty Hours' Devotion. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed on three succes-

sive days, and a part of a fourth, to complete the fortieth hour. During the whole of this period, it was evident what effect the mission had produced, by the multitude of adorers flowing into the church the whole of the day, and thus almost reminding us of the beautiful scenes in a Belgian church, on the days of her greater festivals. I should trespass too long on your time by detailing the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which took place on each day of the exposition. It is sufficient to say, that this solemn and beautiful ceremony was much heightened by the presence of our pious and amiable Bishop, who had been the principal promoter of the mission, and who took a most lively interest in everything that could contribute to its success. To him we are indebted, next to God, and the good missionaries, for the rich harvest that has been produced. May its fruits be of long continuance amongst us."

Follows the second letter inserted in "the Tablet," on the 11th of March, 1845.

"SHEFFIELD—THE LENTEN MISSIONS.

"To the Editor of the Tablet.

"SIR,

"From one who has written so strongly on the subject of 'setting our house in order,' it will be hardly necessary to solicit space for the following notice of the 'Mission' just concluded in this town. The providential results, communicated by a Leeds correspondent in a recent number of 'the Tablet,' have been, if possible, exceeded amongst us; but the true value of that which we have so recently witnessed, is to be found in the altered feelings and dispositions of

the people. The Rev. Dr. Gentili and Rev. Father Furlong, of the Institute of Charity, arrived here from Leeds, their coming being announced, and the object of the mission previously explained and enforced by the Rev. C. Pratt, and subsequently by the Right Rev. Dr. Briggs, with that affectionate solicitude which always distinguishes his Lordship's addresses to his people. But though thus prepared by our good Bishop and pastors, the first appeal of the reverend missionaries fell on the ears of an astonished people with the most unexpected effects; these effects continued to increase throughout, and each succeeding exposition of Catholic doctrine, and each fervent invitation to new exertion, fixed the resolution of some wavering spirit, and confirmed him in the conviction, that only one path of strict and well-defined discipline was left for him to follow. Through the entire of these proceedings, our venerated Bishop remained, evidently, one of the happiest spectators of the success of that labour in which his introductory address showed him so deeply interested. I cannot here avoid remarking, how happily the peculiar style and language of the reverend Fathers seemed suited to the objects of their mission; reason and feeling were alternately appealed to, in a manner the most irresistible, and while a kind of personal admiration for eloquence of the first order drew the distant sinner nearer to his God, the heart was gained and the mind convinced by the clearness and simplicity of practical instruction. The Rev. Dr. Gentili made the Commandments the subject of several discourses, dwelling at great length upon the passions, motives, and habits of life, which in a greater or lesser degree tend to a violation of the fundamental laws of God, and awakening all to a recognition of daily sins, which, from want of reflection or due knowledge, generally

pass unheeded. In the course of the week, ten Protestants were conditionally baptised and received into the Catholic Church, and twelve others are now receiving the necessary instructions. On Sunday, which nominally finished the 'Retreat,' six hundred communicants rewarded their pious labours, and three succeeding days, (as an extension of time,) added two hundred more to the former gratifying number. The remembrance of the past week will long continue in this locality, and will fix its forcible impressions during life in the hearts of many who mixed in its proceedings. Let me assure your readers who have not had the blessings of a similar visitation, that they have little conception of the peculiar character, self-denial, physical endurance, abilities, or zeal, of these pious ambassadors of Divine Providence; and let them pray for the opportunity, when the testimony of their own senses shall corroborate the feeble description which I and others would endeavour to convey.

"I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c."

Here, also, may be mentioned some interesting particulars connected with these missions. The first is, that both in Hull and Sheffield, Father Gentili saw that there were not a few Italians, who, while engaged in commerce, were placed also in dangerous predicaments as regards their morals and faith, owing to their being destitute of those spiritual aids which abound in their own country. He, therefore, paid particular attention to these foreigners, fixing a proper time and place for their assembling together, and preaching to them in their native tongue; so that all availed themselves of the opportunity to approach the sacraments,

and thus gave a public example of that fervent piety which has ever distinguished the Italian people.

CXCVI. At the opening sermon of the Huddersfield mission, the paucity of the audience caused pain to the preacher; wherefore, in order to excite a salutary dread in those who might neglect God's visitation, before concluding his discourse, he mentioned a terrible event which had occurred the preceding year. A young man, careless of the welfare of his soul, and neglecting to go with the other faithful to the Church, where the mission was to be given, set off on horseback for a distant cattle fair; but it happened, nobody could tell how, the unhappy rider was found dead on the public road, while the horse was grazing quietly in a neighbouring field. Two days after this fact was publicly narrated, it happened that a merchant of Huddersfield, who for years had not attended to his religious duties, while going to the town of Dewsbury on some mercantile business, was struck by an apoplectic fit on the road, and died without receiving the sacraments.

CHAPTER III.

FATHER GENTILI, DURING SUMMER, GIVES A COURSE OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES TO THE CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN VARIOUS PLACES.—HE RESUMES HIS PUBLIC MISSIONS AT LEICESTER, WORKSOP, BIRMINGHAM, YORK, MALTON, SCARBOROUGH, WHITBY, NEWCASTLE, ETC.

CXCVII. As the labouring classes are busily occupied in the rural and manufacturing districts during the summer season, Father Gentili suspended his

public missions until autumn—his own toils, however, were not intermitted, for July, August, and part of September, he spent in preaching to a great portion of the English Catholic priesthood; for instance, a double course of exercises to the clergy of the London District at St. Edmund's College;—one course to the clergy of the Midland District at Oscott College;—one course to the clergy of the North at Ushaw College;—one course to the clergy of the York District at the Bishop's residence; and, finally, a double course to the clergy of Lancashire at Liverpool; in all seven courses, at each of which, some Bishops occasionally, and about thirty or forty secular priests, with several regulars, principally Benedictines, attended. Besides all these, he gave the spiritual exercises to some conventual communities; as, for example, to the Dominicanesses at Atherstone, and to the Sisters of Mercy at Dublin and Liverpool. In the last named city he preached at the opening of St. Mary's Church, as well as that of Copperas Hill. In Dublin and Manchester, also, he preached charity sermons with extraordinary success. At the Sardinian Chapel in London, he twice preached both in the English and Italian languages, for two consecutive Sundays. It being the first time he was invited to exercise his ministry in the metropolis, it was gratifying to him, as a member of the Institute of Charity, to begin it in a place of worship appertaining to that pious Sovereign, whose kingdom had been the cradle of the Institute.

CXCVIII. About the middle of September, Father Gentili rejoined his colleague to recommence together a series of public missions, that had been already agreed upon by their superiors, and the respective diocesan Bishops. Wherefore they proceeded to sow the evangelical seed successively in Leicester, Worksop, Bir-

mingham, York, Malton, Scarborough, Whitby, Egton Bridge, and Newcastle, with which they closed the year 1845. Thus, during the elapsed twelve months, besides the special exercises given to clerical and religious communities, the missionaries had preached seventeen public missions: a few remarkable events connected with the latter, we subjoin for the edification of the reader. At Leicester, among other conversions, that in which the power of divine grace seemed most conspicuous, and which afforded to Father Gentili particular consolation, was the case of a Trappist monk. He had absconded from his cloistered abode, and publicly abandoned his religious profession, to the great scandal of his monastic brethren, and the good in general. But having assisted at the sermons of the missionaries, he was moved to compunction for his sins, and returning to his religious home like the prodigal son, he confessed his faults, and implored the superior to receive him as a simple servant of the monastery, employing him, even without the habit, in tilling the earth, or in any other laborious office. His request, though not yielded to at first, was, at length, granted at the Bishop's solicitation; and he was allowed to re-enter the community, where he has since exemplarily persevered.

CXCIX. In another large town, Father Gentili was grieved to learn that there was a party among the Catholics not favourable to devotion towards the blessed Virgin Mary. A pretext, not less silly than untrue, was alleged: viz., that such a devotion alienated heretics from the Church, and urged even Catholics themselves to superstitious practices. As Father Gentili, in his sermon, on one occasion, frequently alluded to the Blessed Virgin, it happened that a factious member of the congregation, repeated loud enough to be

heard by those near, "Blasphemy, blasphemy!" until he was indignantly remonstrated with by another Catholic. Bishop Riddell, the vicar general, and divers other priests present, not only approved of what the missionary had said in honour of the Blessed Virgin, but encouraged him and his companion, to continue unflinchingly exhorting to a proper devotion towards the mother of God. Thus supported, on the following Sunday, when the concourse of hearers was immense, Father Gentili preached on the sublime privileges of Mary: and her panegyrist was comforted by seeing that his spiritual harvest this time exceeded that of any preceding mission. Withal, the opposing party were not yet subdued; after the last mentioned sermon, a lady called on Father Gentili, and questioned his scriptural inferences in honour of the Blessed Virgin. But it was not difficult to convince her of ignorance, even if he did not convert her. On the morrow, he received an anonymous letter, in which it was stated that a great number of citizens were scandalised at his having dared to place the Blessed Virgin above the angels, while the Church had not defined her position. It was remarked that the religious state of the continent showed to what extremes this devotion of the Madonna might lead; that the heresies of Germany, and the horrors of Spain, &c., were the consequences of Marianism in those countries. Father Gentili made known the letters to the Bishop and vicar general of the district, and by their advice, he replied to the hostile party from the pulpit, and zealously refuted their erroneous notions. He demonstrated that these were in accordance with the tenets of the heresiarch Nestorius, who denied Mary's divine maternity. Wherefore he vehemently denounced the anti-catholic upholders of such doctrine,

exhorting his hearers to separate from them, and to beg of Christ and His blessed Mother, the grace of their return to the orthodox faith. This invective fell upon that powerful faction like a thunderbolt; the number of Mary's devotees henceforward increased—the weekly recitation of the rosary was introduced—and a beautiful statue of the queen of all the saints was exposed to public veneration. The assertion that Protestants were deterred from becoming Catholics by our supposed adoration of the virgin, was confuted by the fact, that almost immediately after the just mentioned sermon, six Protestants, of good family, applied for admission into the Church; thus proving the truth of what is said in her liturgy: *Gaude, Maria virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo.*

CC. Travelling once from York to Malton, Father Gentili happened to enter into familiar conversation with a Protestant merchant, who was a passenger in the same railway carriage, and going to some distant place on commercial business. However, he was so impressed by what his companion said on the importance of preferring the soul's salvation to all other interests, that, changing his direction, he accompanied the missionary to Malton, where, after being duly instructed, and conditionally baptised, he became a member of the Catholic Church. He then, with joy, continued his journey.

CCI. Among the conversions which occurred during the mission at Scarborough, the following, perhaps, is the most worthy of notice. A girl, whose mother was a protestant, being ardently desirous that her beloved parent should participate in the grace of that faith to which alone is promised eternal salvation, was advised by Father Gentili to offer to God humble and fervent prayer for her mother's conversion. The good child

cordially did so; but not seeing that any effect had been immediately produced, she returned to the missionary with tears in her eyes, and, with marvellous simplicity, complained that "her mother was not yet converted!" But the Lord was soon pleased to grant her supplication; for towards the end of the mission, her mother asked to be received as a member of the Catholic Church.

CCII. At Whitby also, there occurred a memorable circumstance during the mission. To disturb the pious work of the missionaries, the Protestants chose to make a display of fireworks in the square opposite the Catholic chapel, precisely at the hour appointed for the sermon on the last judgment, in which faith, however, was to represent a fire more appalling than any earthly spectacle. This reflection, the good sense of the audience, and the grace of God, operated so far upon a large congregation, that not one, even of the young, left the Church to gratify a natural curiosity. This self-denial was the more edifying, as in that city pyrotechnical sights were very seldom exhibited.

CCIII. At Newcastle the two missionaries found a vast field for their apostolic zeal. The following letter, written by a Catholic in that city, and inserted in the Tablet, gives a statement of the immense good the mission produced among the population.

"Newcastle-on-Tyne.—To the Editor of the Tablet.

"SIR,

"During the last eighteen days the Revs. Dr. Gentili and Father Furlong have been preaching a mission in the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a brief account of which cannot fail to prove interesting to the thousands who now look with earnest eyes on the rapid strides which Catholicity is every day making

amongst us. Although the season of the year is so unpropitious, all the services were well attended. To the early mass and meditation were seen hurrying along the wet and dimly-lighted streets, the stalwart artisan and tender lady—high and low, rich and poor. However severe the weather, no matter, there was the congregation all devoutly assembled. At the eleven o'clock meditation, the labourer had disappeared, he had gone to his daily toil, and the audience was now principally formed of the wealthier members of the congregation. At three o'clock the benches of the Church were filled with many hundreds of children, whom a gratuitous education saved from ignorance and vice; at seven in the evening it cannot be described how the Church was thronged. The mother was there, her helpless burden in her arms; the soldier, the tradesman, the labourer, the gentle and simple—all gathered to listen to as eloquent, as devout, as moving discourses, as it ever fell to our lot to hear; and although the Church was densely crowded, the strictest silence and decorum was observed. During the two first days the confessionals were comparatively empty, the waters were not moved, but ever since the patient labour of the confessors, and the determined zeal of the penitents, have been most edifying.

“From early dawn till after midnight, not one day, but day after day, and night after night, have the good Fathers sat in the confessionals patiently and kindly listening to the sorrows of the loaded bosom, when out of many hearts thoughts were revealed ‘advising, prescribing, comforting.’ Go to the Churches at what hour you might, crowds were quietly waiting their turn to enter the confessionals; people stayed six or seven hours before their turn came round. And though the mission closes this evening the tide still

flows on. I write at one o'clock at night, and the confessors and penitents are still in the churches. About 1,800 have already received the holy communion. Many and many have made their peace with God who had abandoned Him for long long years, and forty-six Protestants have been guided by God's grace into 'the one fold of the one Shepherd.' The duties of the first week closed with a general communion on the fourth Sunday of Advent, and those of the second opened with one of those beautiful and touching ceremonies that are found nowhere save in Christ's Church—the forty hours devotion to the blessed Sacrament. The munificence of the congregation enabled the clergy to conduct the 'forty hours devotion' in a style of splendour and magnificence that has never been equalled in this country since the 'Ages of Faith.' For four whole days the Lamb sat enthroned on the high altar, on and around which 220 candles burnt unceasingly, exclusively of those carried in procession, which amounted to upwards of seventy. Since the closing of this devotion, solemn benediction of the blessed Sacrament has been given every evening, attended with the same grandeur and glory. I rejoice to live in these days when the spirit of Catholicity is being so happily restored. I speak not of candles, and of incense, and of outward ceremonial; I speak of the great people turning to God, by frequently and devoutly attending the Holy Sacraments; by 'living soberly, justly, and piously.'

"We cannot conclude this notice without paying a tribute as sincere, as it is well deserved, to the unrivalled exertions and zeal of the two holy missionaries who have conducted the retreat. Their words were powerful, but their example no man can ever forget:—and how they can endure their continual labour of

mind and body—the unceasing attendance in the confessional day by day, month by month, and year by year, is more than any one who has not witnessed it can comprehend. Their exertions have awakened a new spirit in the Catholics of this town; abuses had crept in, many duties had been forgotten; but now a move has been made in the right direction, and we trust in God it will prove as lasting as it is at present full of fervent and Catholic feeling.”

A Sunderland correspondent adds:—

“Immediately after leaving Newcastle, without allowing themselves any repose after their late severe labours, they commenced a second mission in Sunderland, and for ten days we have witnessed here a repetition of the same magnificent functions; of the same apostolic zeal and eloquence on the part of the missionaries, of the same devotion and overflowing attendance on the part of the people, which were described by your Newcastle correspondent. Thank God, I may add with perfect truth, that here also the most striking and abundant fruits have been produced. During the last seven days of the mission, the confessionals were crowded from morning until a late hour at night; and although in addition to the missionaries and the resident clergy, priests were sent for from the neighbouring places, numbers were deprived of the consolation of approaching the sacraments, by the want of time and confessors. Twenty protestants were converted; and there have been excited in numerous quarters a feeling of respect for the Catholic religion, a spirit of enquiry and misgivings of conscience, which, if seconded by the zeal, the prayers, and still more the good example of the Catholics of this town, promise an abundant harvest for the future. The mission closed on Sunday, January 11, with what every one will regard as the most beau-

tiful and the crowning portion of the mission—the General Communion. The order usually followed in Rome was observed here by the missionaries. While one of them said Mass, the other, clad in surplice and stole, repeated aloud devout prayers, containing the usual acts preparatory to communion; and during the intervals of these prayers, the choir sang the different verses of the ‘Pange Lingua.’ Upwards of five hundred persons approached at the same time to the Sacrament of peace and love. Never, certainly, since the days of England’s fall into heresy, did this town witness a scene so calculated to move a Catholic heart. I beg to offer my tribute of gratitude and thanks to the venerable Bishop of the Yorkshire District, Dr. Briggs, to whom belongs the glory of originating in this country, a system which is better calculated than any thing else to advance the conversion of protestants, and still more to rekindle the fervent spirit of devotion in the Catholic body.”—J. B.

CCIII. These happy proceedings at Newcastle were clouded by a frightful case, in which it was visibly seen how Divine Justice sometimes punishes obstinacy in ungodliness and vice. There was a poor Irish Catholic who for years had given great scandal, by his habits of drunkenness and impurity: his being deprived by death of his sinful accomplice, was a supernal warning without effect. The missionaries tried in vain to reclaim him, and on the last day of the mission, to the terror of many, he died suddenly—passing without sacramental assistance from time to eternity, there to render to the Judge Supreme an account of His proffered and despised mercies.

CCIV. As we have already stated, the Newcastle mission closed Father Gentili’s labours for the year 1845, of which the beneficial results were extraordinary.

In the memoranda of that year, it is recorded how this zealous missionary received two hundred and fifty protestant adults into the church—baptised some hundreds of children born of protestant parents—admitted to the sacramental confession, and to the Eucharistic table thousands of Catholic penitents—and reformed a great number of sinners—among whom, the cases of some, immersed in vicious impiety, seemed almost desperate. Now, if his preaching efforts during ten series of spiritual exercises to clerical and religious communities, and also the eighteen series of more arduous missions to the public be considered; the wear and tear of body and mind incurred in travelling from place to place, and in performing his other duties as a priest, confessor, and religious, be also taken into account; Father Gentili must assuredly appear a wonderful man, and be gratefully regarded as a gift of Providence to the Church in England. This surprise, perchance, will increase, when it is stated that such immense labour was borne by one whose constitution was delicate, and whose countenance was of death-like paleness. He always abstained from meat and wine—drinking nothing but water—except during the last two years of his life, when he was forced by obedience to take more care of his injured health, by drinking a little wine.*

CCV. Bearing all these circumstances in mind, it must doubtless afford edification to read in his letters to superiors, the humble sentiments with which he mentions his successful ministry.

To the Father General Rosmini, he wrote as follows: "In the midst of my successful exertions,

* His only relaxation was to retire to a holy and tranquil solitude for eight or ten days, once or twice a year, to refresh his own soul with the spiritual exercises.

God is pleased to make me feel my own nothingness in so lively a manner, that I can only deduce therefrom an internal confusion for my many sins, and a profound practical knowledge of the infinite benignity of Him who deigns to employ one unworthy of all good in a work of so much importance to His glory. Sometimes I cannot satiate myself with blessing and thanking Him for it. And so great is the peace I experience in this sentiment of confusion, that I only ask of God to increase it evermore, and to purify still further all my intentions, in order thereby to obtain for once the gift of perfect charity, which is the aim of a christian and of our Institute."

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW SERIES OF MISSIONS TO THE PEOPLE, AND EXERCISES TO THE CLERGY, AT SUNDERLAND, BREWOOD, MANCHESTER, NEWPORT, NOTTINGHAM, EGTON, UGTHORPE, LONDON, YORK, DUBLIN, WATERFORD, LIVERPOOL, &c.

CCVL. Father Gentili's professional labours in 1846 were not less productive of fruit than they had been the preceding year. Although the missions and exercises at this period were somewhat fewer in number, yet, in some cases, they considerably exceeded those of the former epoch in duration. However, we may as well state, first, the toils of our missionary in his apostolic pilgrimages, according to chronological order. On New Year's Day, 1846, he and his fellow-labourer commenced their first mission in Sunderland. From this

place, towards the middle of January, they proceeded to Durham; and thence, at the end of the same month, they went to Brewood. Here the two missionaries separated; Father Gentili going to give a course of exercises to the community of St. Clare, at Scorton, while Father Furlong went to preach a mission at Middlesborough. In the middle of February, the two colleagues met again, to preach a public mission, which lasted fifteen days, in St. Augustine's parish, Manchester. Thence they went to Newport, in Wales. After this mission, they again separated; and on the 18th of March, Father Gentili alone commenced a mission at Sir Edward Vavasour's seat, at Hazlewood, while his colleague did the same in the city of Abberford. Once more uniting their strength at Nottingham, they preached a mission, which proved so exhausting to Father Gentili, that his superiors ordered him to take some repose. But, on the 3rd of May, he returned with his companion to the mission work, first at Egton Bridge, where he had been the preceding winter, and to Ugthorpe, in the Yorkshire District. And the end of May, their services were required in London, where the mission lasted fifteen days. During July, August, and part of September, for the reason before mentioned, the public missions were suspended, and Father Gentili employed himself in giving spiritual exercises to the clergy and religious. He commenced with the Sisters of Providence, in the central house at Loughborough. Some pious secular ladies also attended, and of these, three decided upon renouncing the world. One entered among the before-named sisters; a second took the Benedictine habit; and the third joined the nuns of the Good Shepherd. On the fifth of July, he began two series of exercises to the clergy of the London District. Thence he went to

York, to give another course to the ecclesiastics of that district in the presence of their exemplary zealous prelate, the Right Rev. Dr. Briggs. From York, Gentili returned once more to London, to perform a similar good work for the Sisters of Mercy in Bermondsey. Hence he travelled to Darlington in the north, to repeat the same to the Teresian nuns of that place. It may be here remarked, that in some of these convents the spiritual exercises had never been preached before, and that some relaxation of rule had crept in. But, generally speaking, these imperfections were owing more to ignorance than malice, as was proved by the docility with which these good religious received the Word of God, and acted up to Father Gentili's advice in adopting a strict observance of the rules.

CCVII. Towards the middle of September, Father Gentili accompanied Bishop Briggs to Ireland, as he had done the preceding year. After arriving in Dublin he witnessed an anniversary festival in thanksgiving to God for the aid afforded by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. On this occasion, he made the acquaintance of Archbishop Murray, by whom he was invited to dine, in company with the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Polding—the Bishop of Adelaide, Dr. Murphy, and other prelates. There also he met with some Hiberno-Roman acquaintances among the priests, with whom he renewed his ancient pious friendship. On the following Sunday, the 20th of September, he left the Irish Metropolis for Waterford, where he preached in the cathedral to a large concourse of people in behalf of the schools directed by the Brothers of Christian Doctrine.

CCVIII. Returning to England, he rejoined his colleague at Manchester, where they preached public missions in the churches of St. Wilfrid and St. Patrick.

These exercises lasted nearly two months. The missionaries, however, met with unusual contradictions and difficulties, as shall be narrated in due time. At the end of November, they proceeded to Liverpool to preach a mission in the Benedictine church of St. Peter's. In the middle of December, they were recalled to London for a mission at St. George's. So that, this year Father Gentili had given thirteen public missions, and eight courses of spiritual exercises to ecclesiastical and religious communities, besides charity, and other sermons, amounting altogether, at least, to seven hundred discourses. To these exertions must be added, his fatigues in the confessional, which used to be surrounded by numerous penitents, especially Italians, in Manchester and Liverpool. Countless conversions of sinners crowned his efforts. Not a few of the reclaimed had been only Catholics in name, having been christened solely. Without enumerating the public and private enmities put an end to, the illicit unions legalized, the schools opened, the newly baptised, and the thousands of faithful communicants, suffice it to say, that the converts from heresy this year alone exceeded seven hundred.

CCIX. After this general review of Father Gentili's labours for twelve months, we may now call attention to some particular facts calculated to edify the reader. In the city of Durham, for instance, the following, which occurred during the mission there, demonstrates the efficacy of solemn external worship so prudently encouraged by the Catholic Church, while by sectarians it is unwisely blamed and proscribed. Among the many sinners moved by God's grace to conversion, there was one who had long been unmindful of his soul's eternal welfare, and had become utterly depraved. Seeing such crowds of people going to the church to

hear the missionaries, he was also induced to go one evening, to see what was going forward. Strange to relate, he had scarcely entered the house of the Lord, when the brilliant sight of the Most Adorable Sacrament, enthroned on a splendidly illumined altar, with the devout attitude of the assembled worshippers, made such a powerful impression on his mind, that, before hearing the sermon, he was moved to compunction and grief; then he speedily inquired for a confessor, humbly avowed his iniquities, and resolved henceforth to lead the life of a good christian.

CCX. During the mission at Brewood, there was a Catholic who had led a wicked life, and who cared not to avail himself of the acceptable time, which Providence then presented to him. But one day, by the sudden discharge of a loaded gun, which he was carrying, he grievously wounded himself. Confined to his bed, he began to consider his misfortune as a manifest admonition from heaven. Then he was induced to send for the minister of God, to administer to him the sacraments. Thus, in affliction and sickness he did that which he was unwilling to perform when strong and healthy. In the same town, there was another person who came one evening to hear the missionary preach. The sermon happened to be on the tremendous existence of hell, with its jaws continually open to devour sinners who turn a deaf ear to the voice of the Lord calling them to repentance. For when obstinately wicked and rebellious, they are usually surprised by death, which has no respect for the age, sex, or condition of any person. This individual returned home greatly alarmed at the awful truth he had heard, so much so that his troubled conscience prevented him from going to bed, fearing that divine vengeance might overtake him in his state of sin. Wherefore, restless

and terror-stricken, though it was past midnight, he sent to implore the priest to come and hear his confession, and thus deliver him from the dread of eternal damnation.

CHAPTER V.

EVENTS RELATIVE TO THE MISSIONS GIVEN AT ST. AUSTIN'S, ST. WILFRID'S, AND ST. PATRICK'S IN MANCHESTER, ETC.

CCXI. During the three missions given this year in Manchester, there occurred certain events which we think not unworthy of record. With the usual solemnity, on February 15th, the mission was first opened in the Church of St. Augustin. It had been previously rumoured in the city, that the missionaries denounced balls from the pulpit: now whether to anticipate their opposition, or to deter them therefrom if intended, we cannot positively state; but the fact is, that just before their arrival, a splendid ball was advertised in the papers, with the names of the most distinguished among the company present. The missionaries were, moreover, informed of the opinions prevalent among many Catholics, and were advised to be moderate and reserved on the subject of balls. They answered that they did not absolutely condemn dancing as sinful; but knowing well the scandalous circumstances, and grievous perils, to which Christians were exposed in similar pastimes, they should be wanting to their duty if they did not admonish the faithful thereof. Certainly, at

present, by availing themselves of the spiritual cises, Christians would promote the interests of souls better than by a jealous attachment to the recreation of dancing. Jesus Christ had enjoined followers to part with hands, feet, and eyes, when limbs proved a stumbling block to salvation. If, the doctrine of a preacher, who animadverts upon amusement, on account of the serious danger with which it is accompanied, be deemed excessive, what will be thought of Christ's maxim? This their evangelical view of the case seemed especially confirmed by Providence in the following event, which left an impression of terror on the minds of not a few of the party. On the second day of mission, the news spread that a lady who had been invited, and who came from a distance, to take part in the beforementioned ball, fell ill, and shortly died; so that her journey which had for its object a joyful feast, ended by a summons to the tribunal of God! After this the sermons of the missionaries were better attended, the number of applicants for the sacrament of penance increased to such a degree, fifteen confessors, assiduously engaged, scarcely sufficed for the demand. One hundred and twenty-seven Protestants abjured their errors; nearly nine thousand persons communicated; and such was the pious zeal displayed for adorning the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, that more than three thousand wax candles were, for this purpose, offered to the Church.

CCXII. The next mission towards the end of September, was preached at St. Wilfrid's. From the commencement the number of people assembled to hear the word of God was so great, that the missionary was occasionally induced to transfer the pulpit from the Church to the public square, in order to address a

crowd of more than 6000 persons. The penitents were so numerous, that some waited for days in the Church until their turn came to enter the confessionals, and seeming like the Biblical multitude in the wilderness, not to heed the wants of nature. This inconvenience occurred, notwithstanding that several confessors were engaged from six or seven in the morning, till twelve o'clock at night, if we except the intervals necessary for their refreshment. It even happened that one of the missionaries on leaving the pulpit in the evening, went direct to his confessional, where he remained all night unceasingly occupied till five o'clock next morning, when he was again called to the pulpit, to address, as usual, a meditation to the assembly. When Father Gentili made his concluding discourse, the vast audience was so moved to compunction, that the preacher's voice was almost unheard amid the sobs and sighs of the pious multitude.

CCXIII. Immediately after the mission at St. Wilfrid's, a similar course of instructions was commenced at St. Patrick's Church, situate in the most populous Catholic parish of Manchester. Father Gentili, however, found this the most difficult mission he ever had to conduct in his life. The why, and the wherefore, will be better understood after some preliminary details concerning the deplorable state of this congregation, which the missionaries had to reform. The vicar apostolic, Bishop Brown, had thought proper to remove the senior clergyman of St. Patrick's, and to appoint as his successor, the Rev. Dr. Roskell, who had been educated in Rome, and who enjoyed, deservedly, a reputation for prudence, learning, piety, and those other virtues which should adorn a pastor of souls.

Although the Bishop had weighty reasons for making a change in the parochial administration, his arrange-

ments dissatisfied several of the flock, who, instead of yielding with docility to their prelate's orders, endeavoured to obstruct its execution. They accused the Bishop of arbitrary proceeding towards their late incumbent, whom they considered as an innocent victim, they blamed and derided his successor—threatened to appeal to Rome—refused to pay the Church dues—and hinted at more violent measures if their former pastor was not reinstated in his office. In fact, they did not confine themselves to mere menaces; for when on the Sunday the new incumbent was beginning to address words of peace to the congregation, with the hope of conciliating the refractory, and putting an end to the scandal given by their disunion, alike to Catholics and Protestants, he was most shamefully interrupted by the adverse party. Seeing how vain it would be to insist with men blinded by obstinacy and passion, Dr. Roskell humbly knelt before the altar in silent prayer for those scandalous agitators. Then rising, he turned towards the people to give his parting benediction. But he was again insulted by the factious, who vociferated that they did not want his blessing, but the return of the pastor who had been taken from them. By obliging the incumbent in this manner to leave the Church, the rebellious party hoped to have gained their point; but they were mistaken in their calculations: for the Bishop having performed a conscientious duty in making the alteration complained of, would not be coerced into a retraction by these misguided men, who were violating canonical law, and unscrupulously attacking ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUATION AND SUCCESS OF THE MISSION AT ST.
PATRICK'S, MANCHESTER.

CCXIV. Under all the lamentable circumstances mentioned in the preceding chapter, the Rev. Dr. Roskell came to an understanding with some members of his flock, and it was agreed upon to request the two Rev. missionaries, Gentili and Furlong, after they had finished at St. Wilfrid's, to lend the aid of their sacred ministry to St. Patrick's parish, in order to try the efficacy of those means, which a regular course of the spiritual exercises obviously presented, for banishing the demon of discord.

Accordingly a deputation of nine respectable Irishmen carried an address, signed by Dr. Roskell and themselves, to the beforementioned missionaries, and solicited them to favour St. Patrick's congregation with a series of sermons, at their earliest convenience, according to the usual method. To this proposal Father Gentili acceded, and expressed how pleased he was at their application for a course of religious exercises, in the hope that now the scandalous strife which had lasted so long, would soon cease, and that all, he trusted, would make their peace with God and man.

CCXV. The following Sunday afternoon, in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, a grand procession took place in St. Wilfrid's churchyard. An invitation having been sent to the various Guilds, they all attended with

the exception of St. Patrick's, although on the morning of the same day, when announcing the promised extraordinary mission, from the altar, Dr. Roskell reminded those belonging to the Guild of the intended procession, which had been officially intimated three days before. Grieved at this new scandal given to the town by the absence of a confraternity at such a conjuncture, the missionaries were convinced that while one part of the congregation was peacefully inclined—a section continued adverse to conciliatory measures; and doubtless, it was the more disheartening to see the Guild, which is usually composed of the most pious among the people—thus manifesting so public an opposition.

CCXVI. Withal, as soon as the mission at St. Wilfrid's was ended, that of St. Patrick's commenced. Reading a portion of the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, where it is said that our Divine Redeemer, sending His disciples two and two, told them to announce peace at the entrance of every house; Father Gentili took occasion to proclaim peace to his hearers, in the name of God and the whole court of heaven. He then explained the object and importance of his sacred mission—the plenary indulgence granted by the Church to those who worthily participate therein—and invited all to participate in this season of grace, by repenting of their past misdeeds, and asking for pardon and reconciliation of their offended yet still merciful Almighty Father in heaven. Notwithstanding this temperate introduction, there were symptoms of disquietude among the auditors; and it caused no little alarm to the missionaries to learn that about two hundred persons had refused to pay the usual admission penny for their seats—a tax which had been customary ever since the foundation of this chapel. Thus the

refractory shewed that they were still obstinate in adhering to a resolution passed several months before, at a meeting held in the churchyard, by those hostile to the new pastor, of no longer paying bench rent, which was the main support of the church. Their object in this withdrawal of supplies was to compel the Bishop to reinstate their late parish priest.

CCXVII. The next day there was also much disorder in the church, both morning and evening, so that Father Gentili was obliged to interrupt his discourse, and request those who were talking to adjourn their conversation to another time. On Tuesday morning, at the children's service, there was a fresh disturbance, and again at the night service for adults. On Wednesday evening, after two days had been already spent in instructing the people on the first commandment, the preacher went on to explain the gravity of the sin of sacrilege, when observing that impertinent conversation was still carried on, he changed the direction of his remarks, and told the parties present that he had been invited to preach to them a gospel of peace, and that invitation had been complied with. He had anticipated that the profanations of God's house would ere this have been repaired by the tears of the repentant. Then taking the crucifix from his breast, he impressively continued, as follows, his appeal: "I came amongst you with the ensign of peace—the image of your crucified Saviour, whose blood was shed for your salvation. If you do not wish to make peace with Him, I have no other alternative than to substitute for the symbol of peace, the emblem of penance;" and so putting aside his black mantle and cross, he robed himself with a purple stole, one of the insignia of a sacerdotal judge at his spiritual tribunal. At this sight the spectators were moved to tears, and excited

to a degree unusual in this country. Then Father Gentili resumed his discourse, and advised those who had yielded to the impulse of grace to pray for the rest, in order to their conversion from evil ways. Moreover, on account of the sacrilegious examples that had been publicly given for some time past, he proposed a fast of three days, and begged them to join with him in making this little atonement for their offences. However, the apparent calm produced by this appeal, was but the prelude to a more violent storm.

CCXVIII. The following night the Church was besieged by the whole party. The shouting of persons outside were signals of no friendly import, and Father Gentili no sooner commenced Divine service, than he apprehended some disturbance would occur. Shortly after, towards the end of the Church, a female raised her voice as if quarrelling with some others: the missionary then addressing the group of women from whom the noise proceeded, reminded them of St. Paul's injunction to females to be silent in church. Quiet was then preserved until the close of the sermon, when, not far from the preacher's platform, one woman struck another, who wanted to pass and go home. This blow had an almost electrical effect: the assembly uprose in a frightful uproar. Vainly did the preacher call upon them to respect the house of the Lord—he conjured them in the name of Christ to be tranquil; but amid the confusion and noise his voice had become inaudible. At length some were opening the doors with the intent of dispersing both priest and people;—but Gentili declared it to be useless: he would not succumb to fear, and he loudly repeated, “I will not move, I will not move.” By degrees the clamour subsided, and the agitators seeing that they were not likely to

succeed again in browbeating the missionary, desisted from further efforts. At length there set in a reaction, and this last unsuccessful attempt to break up the mission brought over many of the insurgents to a sense of their misconduct. Indeed, so great was the number of penitents, that it was found necessary to call for the aid of additional priests, who, to the number of fourteen, were engaged day and night in the confessionals, sometimes till two or three o'clock in the morning.

CCXIX. While lecturing the congregation of St. Patrick's, on the anti-Catholic principle of interfering in ecclesiastical matters, Father Gentili shewed that the inducting and removing Pastors of souls is an episcopal right, over which the laity have no control: and that the Church is so jealous on this head, as to menace with an interdict those who attempt to frustrate by fraud or violence, the ordinance of lawful authority. On this subject, he quoted canons and decrees referred to by St. Alphonsus Liguori, to prove that lay-usurpation of a judge's office between bishops and their clergy, is utterly anti-catholic, and contrary to the Church's ancient discipline. If such a principle became general, there would be an end of Pontifical supremacy, and schisms would be inevitable. Moreover, as this principle had gained ground—and as many sinful precedents had been lately asserted in Manchester, Father Gentili recommended the priests of various churches in that city, to state their opinion, whether it would not be necessary to check the evil and repair the scandal by a solemn declaration against lay interference in ecclesiastical arrangements of this kind; and also whether a formal apology ought not to be made to the Bishop for the recent attacks on his privilege. The clergy having unanimously agreed to the proposal, a

declaration was speedily drawn up and presented. The Vicar Apostolic, too, prohibited, under pain of interdict to be incurred "*ipso facto*," all his subjects from attending any meeting held by the partizans of the ex-incumbent, relative to Church affairs. The following circumstance, also, contributed to decrease the number of the more obstinate rebels. A leader of the faction fell dangerously ill, and recognising his sickness as a punishment from heaven, he sent for a priest to prepare him for death. In sorrow for the past, he charged his confessor to publicly ask pardon in his name of the bishop—the Rev. Dr. Roskell, and the people, for all the scandal and annoyance he had given.

CCXX. The memorable mission at St. Patrick's, which began on the 27th of September, was not concluded before the 12th of November, having lasted nearly seven weeks. To the missionaries, it proved a task replete with difficulties and trials; but they were however consoled by the happy results of their labours. This assertion is confirmed by the following letter inserted in the "*Tablet*," the 21st of November of the year 1846.

"After the turbulent scenes which have recently taken place in Manchester, we are delighted to have to announce the favourable termination of the St. Patrick's mission, on Sunday last, at the half-past six o'clock service.

"We say '*the favourable termination*,' because, though during the course of this mission much has occurred to afflict and disedify all who have any regard for religion, yet on the whole, the labours of Dr. Gentili and Father Furlong have been eminently successful in the results. These good men, had not simply to preach the known and ordinary truths of the Gos-

pel; not simply to kindle a fire in lukewarm souls; to encourage the frail to resist temptation; and to bring back to a sense of his duty the sinner drowned in forgetfulness and sloth. They have had to deal not merely with worldly minds, requiring a fresh impulse from above, but with hostile minds possessed with a distorted and perverse spirit of enthusiasm, and obstinately resisting the invitations of God's ministers, as if there were some previous question to be adjusted before they could lawfully be called on to attend to the concerns of their own souls. They have had to deal not merely with the private scandal of rebellion, but with conduct savouring of schism. In their addresses to protestants, they have had to pierce through the obstacles which the unseemly behaviour of professed Catholics placed between the truths they preached, and the souls they laboured to save. These circumstances, together with the excitement by which this kind of discord is ever attended—so unfavourable to that practice of meditation and internal recollection which it is the very aim of Missions to encourage—presented difficulties of no trivial character. And yet—Almighty God be thanked for it—the result has been far otherwise than might have been expected; and it has been shown that in St. Patrick's congregation, the genuine and wholesome religious zeal of the larger part, has been more than a match for the false and pernicious enthusiasm of a few bewildered agitators.

“At the close of the mission, the number of protestant converts, amounted to about one hundred and ninety; of Holy Communions, to about 9,000. The whole of last Saturday and Saturday night, the confessionals were crowded by persons anxious to make their peace with God. Some remained in the Church

all night, waiting for their turn to approach the holy tribunal; and when the Priest at six o'clock on Sunday morning, was obliged to cease the labours of the confessional and betake himself to other duties, he had to dismiss from the Sacristy door, many who had waited all night for him. Others, again, having made their confessions, had watched all night in prayer before the altar, as a preparation fitting for the reception of the ever adorable Sacrament."

But what more than anything else shows the wonderful success which Father Gentili and his companions obtained in the mission which they preached at Manchester, and especially at St. Patrick's, is the following memorial, by which the Clergy of Manchester and Salford presented in a body to Father Gentili, as a public testimony of their respect and gratitude to him and to his fellow labourer.



A MEMORIAL

PRESENTED BY THE CLERGY OF MANCHESTER AND SALFORD,

TO

THE VERY REVEREND DR. GENTILI,

On occasion of his concluding the Mission given by
him at St. Patrick's,

November the 12th, 1846.

"VERY REV. FATHER,

"Sensible of the great benefits which have resulted from the missions which you have given in Manchester and other important towns, we cannot suffer you to go from amongst us, without endeavouring to acknowledge the favour which you have

conferred upon us, in devoting so much of your time to the spiritual welfare of the souls committed to our charge. In their names and our own, we beg leave to thank you most cordially. The immense multitude of degenerate Catholics who have been reclaimed, and the still more remarkable number of converts which have been received into the Church, during the exercises which you have conducted, convince us that the hand of God is with you, and that the practice of giving missions, which you have recently introduced into this country, is one of the greatest blessings which has accrued to religion in modern times.

“When we reflect on the profound learning, the practical skill, the prompt decision, and the invincible courage with which you have encountered and overcome the peculiar difficulties which surrounded the mission of St. Patrick’s, we feel that a still more ample tribute of admiration and gratitude is due to you for your charitable and most disinterested exertions.

“We are aware, Rev. Sir, that these difficulties were of no ordinary magnitude, and that, consequently, a more than ordinary call upon your zeal and charity has been required to overcome them. We know how forbearingly you watched the storm of rebellious opposition with which you were threatened by a party of undutiful children of the Church, on the very eve of your departure from St. Wilfrid’s, where the seed of the Word of God had happily fructified and brought forth an abundant harvest. We know how, notwithstanding, you repaired to St. Patrick’s, and there began the work of peace and reconciliation. But, alas, for this unhappy town, the storm which had been for a long time brooding, and gradually gaining strength, soon burst upon it, and displayed a most melancholy schism in the Church.

“In this sad emergency it was, Rev. Sir, that we so effectually experienced the powerful assistance of your talented exertions. By means of them, and the well-timed interposition of the Bishop, the influence of the factious opposition has been nearly destroyed, and peace and reconciliation are once more beginning to gladden our hearts. Though the people are still suffering from the effects of their own folly, yet, we hope, by the judicious counsels which you, Rev. Sir, have suggested, we may be able to complete the work of reconciliation which you have so happily begun; and that in a short time they may all return to the one fold from which they have strayed. Allow us then, once more, to express our grateful sense which we entertain for the services which you have rendered to religion; nor must we forget the brother and companion of your labours, the Rev. Father Furlong, who, by his powerful sermons in the various churches of Manchester and Salford, and by his prudent, charitable, and patient zeal in the sacred tribunal, has entitled himself to the gratitude of many, and to the love and esteem of all. May God who ever watches over His Church, and who from time raises up *light amidst darkness*, still bless your united labours with abundant success. May He bestow upon you long life, that you may continue to labour for His glory, for the propagation of the Faith, the salvation of souls, and for the perfection of that crown of glory which we feel persuaded is laid up for you in His heavenly kingdom.

“In conclusion, Reverend Father, we hope that your absence from us will not be long, and that amidst the fields of labour that lie before you, you will occasionally remember us, and pray that we may be strength-

ened, and enabled to water and to bring to perfection the precious seed which you have sown.

"Signed

" W. TURNER,	}	St. Augustine's.
" JOHN REMMER,		
" THOMAS UNSWORTH,		
" ROBERT CROSKELL,	}	St. Chad's.
" GEO. GREEN,		
" W. J. SHEEHAN,		
" MATTHIAS FORMBY,	}	St. Mary's.
" THOMAS SMITH,		
" R. B. ROSKELL,	}	St. Patrick's.
" EDMUND CANTWELL,		
" EDWARD UNSWORTH,		
" J. F. WHITAKER,	}	St. Wilfrid's.
" JOSEPH MEANY,		
" JAMES BOARDMAN,		St. John's."

CHAPER VII.

FATHER GENTILI'S APOSTOLICAL LABOURS IN THE YEARS
1847-48, &c.

CCXXI. In this chapter, we purpose passing in review the last sixteen months of Father Gentili's life; that is, from January, 1847, till the end of April, 1848, when he went to the capital of Ireland, where his mortal career terminated. There are many interesting things recorded, at which we must give but a cursory glance, in order to avoid a wearisome repetition of similar

details. In the year 1847, the first field wherein the missionaries began publicly to sow the Word of God, was Cheadle, in Staffordshire, where a magnificent Church has been recently erected by the Earl of Shrewsbury. Besides his daily instructions to the people, Father Gentili managed to find time, on two Sundays during the mission, to preach in the Chapel at Alton Towers, the seat of the noble peer before-mentioned. He also contrived to give spiritual assistance to the Benedictine Nuns at Caverswell.

CCXXII. On the 17th of January, he departed for the Northern District, where he successively preached missions at North Shields, Stockton-on-Tees, and Hartlepool, by the request of Bishop Riddell, who was not only present, but always shared the toils of the missionaries. Great was the result of their united labours. The poor Catholics hastened with uncommon assiduity to hear the Divine Word, and to approach the Sacraments, which by many of them had been neglected for years. A stimulus was given to their zeal by the following fatal accident. One of the faithful who had been to his duty in the morning, after returning home to his work, was killed by a sudden fall of earth. This event spread such consternation among his fellow-workmen, impressing them with the uncertainty of life's duration, and with the urgency of being prepared for an inevitable judgment hereafter, that fifty of them ran to the church, and begged to make a confession of their sins. Although it was the late hour of midnight they were admitted into the church, and the missionary could not but give them some instructions how to prepare for the Sacraments on the morrow. Independently of the spiritual advantages which the Catholics derived from these missions,

they were also beneficial to Protestants, of whom nearly a hundred were converted to the true faith.

Towards the end of February, the two missionaries journeyed to London, where they preached four successive missions: at the Sardinian and Spanish chapels; at St. Mary's, Moorfields; and, finally, at St. Mary's, Chelsea. At the last-named place, instead of the series of sermons usual during a mission, was delivered a course of devotional instructions for "May," commonly called "the Month of Mary." This was also a congenial theme for Father Gentili, who was always delighted with opportunities of publishing the glories of the ever blessed Mother of God. In the meantime, his companion, Father Furlong, went alone to preach missions in the north, at Houghton-le-Spring and Darlington. With the London missions Father Gentili felt pleased, so splendid and sumptuous were the public Benedictions to the Most Holy Sacrament. Having to address mixed audiences of English and Italian, he sometimes spoke in their native tongue to his own countrymen. The services, also, were attended by some of the nobility and prelacy; of the latter may be named, the Bishops of Olena, Adelaide, and Montreal in Canada. The spiritual harvest no doubt would have been greater, both among Catholics and Protestants, had there been sufficient accommodation in the chapels, and more confessors. Withal, the fruits of repentance among many were discernible in the numerous peace-makings, restorations of ill-gotten goods, destructions of bad books, almsdeeds, &c. Besides the return of thirty Protestant converts to the Church, among the penitents there was one remarkable on account of his sacerdotal character, which he had unfortunately disgraced. During the religious exercises at the Spanish chapel, he was moved to compunc-

tion, and resolved, with the help of God's grace, to leave England, and to go to Belgium to do penance for his sins.

CCXXII. The 23rd of May, Father Gentili rejoined his companion at Preston. Among the memoranda of this mission, which lasted four weeks, may be mentioned, that after the forty hours' prayer, there was a magnificent procession with the Blessed Sacrament, publicly, in the open air; the guilds with their banners and music walked in the processional line, according to the Roman custom. This was repeated five times during the mission. So great was the concourse of people to the sermons, that it was three times necessary for one of the missionaries to preach to the crowd in the cemetery outside, notwithstanding the rain; the other was similarly engaged within the church.

Among Catholics the spiritual crop was abundant. Eighty-two Protestants also were converted to the ancient faith. A correspondent of the Tablet, dated June 26th, 1847, writes thus: "After a month's duration, the mission at St. Augustine's was concluded last Sunday. At the end of the Te Deum, and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the two missionaries warmly exhorted the people to perseverance, and then took an affectionate leave. The church was crowded; and though the rain fell heavily, there was a large number listening outside to Father Furlong's sermon. At the end of Father Gentili's discourse, there was scarcely a tearless eye in the church. The congregation wept, prayed, and blessed the man of God who had come amongst them to announce pardon, peace, and reconciliation. But although the mission here is over, we firmly trust its advantages will abundantly remain, because, what was broken has been repaired, and what was weakened has become strong."

CCXXIII. Taking Egton Bridge in their way, in order to sermonise at the opening of its new church, the two missionaries returned to London a second time this year. On their arrival in that immense metropolis, they preached in two of the before-mentioned chapels charity sermons in behalf of the society of St. Vincent of Paul. The 11th of July, they commenced a regular mission in the newly opened church of SS. Peter and Paul, Rosamond Street, Clerkenwell. Besides the good effected by their exertions among the Catholics in that populous neighbourhood, twenty-one Protestants abjured heresy and returned to the faith of their forefathers. But the conversion most gratifying to the missionaries, was that of a minister of the Anglican Church, with his wife and family. To omit, for brevity's sake, other accessory labours in London during the month of July, let us, once more, accompany Father Gentili to the North, where, in the month of August, he gave the annual exercises to the clergy assembled at Ushaw College, in the presence of the Bishop and his Vicar-General. Subsequently, he went on a similar errand to the Sisters of Mercy, at Liverpool, to the nuns at Scorton, and to the religious ladies at York-Bar.

CCXXIV. About the middle of September, he left York for Dublin, to advocate in the Jesuit's church of that city the claims of the Christian Brothers' poor schools. Afterwards, on the anniversary festival of the society for the propagation of the faith, he preached at the metropolitan church in the presence of the Archbishop of the city, the Archbishop of Corfu, the Bishops of Bombay and Hobart Town, many ecclesiastics, and an immense concourse of people. Finally, he gave a series of spiritual exercises to the students of All Hallows college near Dublin.

CCXXV. After leaving the Hibernian capital, and crossing the channel, he proceeded to Manchester, where, in St. Chad's church, on the 26th of September, he and his companion commenced a mission, which lasted a fortnight. Among other blessed results must be specially mentioned, the conversion of no less than sixty-one Protestants. From Manchester the two indefatigable missionaries next bent their steps towards Bristol. Here, after fifteen days' labour, amid a sea of errors, these fishers of men caught in their apostolical net fifty-three Protestants, and succeeded in landing them on the shore of Catholic truth. Father Gentili, unaccompanied, once more set sail for Dublin, to preach there in behalf of the public hospitals. The interests of the sick poor were dear to his compassionate heart, and he pleaded their cause so eloquently, that a large collection of money was made on the occasion. Some of the charitably disposed being deficient in the current coin of the realm, offered whatever they had valuable at hand; thus, for instance, one gave a watch, and another a purse. Returning to England, he preached similar sermons with equal success, in the cities of Sheffield and York. It was in the last-named place that he nearly closed his labours for the year 1847. Withal, before the end of December, he again rejoined his colleague, Father Furlong, at Huddersfield, where they preached a mission which lasted four weeks. During this time they greatly ameliorated the morals of the Catholics; among other crying disorders in the town, they managed to shut up two houses of ill fame. Fifteen converts were received into the Church, and one hundred and fifty boys and girls were prepared for their first communion. After this mission, Father Gentili and his companion proceeded together evangelizing various congregations in the Yorkshire Dis-

trict, until the middle of February 1848, when they went again to Bristol to preach a mission which lasted four weeks. Thence they went to give a similar course of instructions at Bath. The united number of converts in both these towns exceeded one hundred. If we sum up Father Gentili's apostolical labours for the past sixteen months, or the third year of his office as an Itinerant Missionary, we shall find that he preached fifteen missions: of these some lasted a month, others only a fortnight: besides giving five courses of spiritual exercises, and several charity sermons: so that, during this time, he must altogether have delivered not less than eight hundred discourses. The benefits which accrued thereby to his Catholic hearers, it is not easy to calculate; but of his Protestant auditors it is reckoned that, at least, four hundred were induced to enter the one fold of the one Shepherd—Jesus Christ, to whom be all the honour and glory resulting from the labours of His anointed ministers.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS OF SPIRITUAL ADVICE TO A MARRIED LADY.

CCXXVI. The singular talents wherewith it pleased the Almighty to endow Father Gentili, and the marvellous effects produced by his saintly life—his zeal—his prudence—and his charity, tended, in a short time, to elevate him in public estimation. Hence, not only regular, but many secular persons also, not unfrequently, applied to him for counsel as to

the best method of faithfully and perfectly accomplishing their professional duties.

From the various letters of this zealous missionary to individuals who had placed themselves under his spiritual guidance, we select seven, addressed to the pious mother of a large family, as they contain some wise and practical maxims well adapted for general use. Of these epistles, the first dated on the feast of St. John Chrysostom, 1846, encourages his correspondent to despise temptations to vanity, to persevere in doing good, and to avoid the snares of the wicked one against her soul's welfare.

"DEAR MRS.

"When St. Gregory the Great was about to write his celebrated work on morals, he was strongly tempted with vanity and pride, and, in order to conquer the temptation, he resolved to give up the work, and not to write it at all; but on a second thought, he found that this was a temptation greater than the other; that there was no need of yielding to the temptation; that by resisting it one gains a greater merit than by avoiding it: and consequently he wrote the work, and obtained the double merit of the good he did to the Church by so learned a work, and of having resisted the temptation of vanity. Have it then as a principle that *we must never give up any good for any temptations of pride whatsoever*. The intention of the enemy is either to discourage us from our good resolutions, or to deprive us of the merit we may gain by the good we do: but I must tell you that St. Philip Neri says, that there are three kinds of vanity. One which he calls '*mistress*,' another, '*companion*,' and another, '*servant*.' The *mistress* is that one which commands a good work, goes before it, and therefore

corrupts it, and makes it sinful. The *companion* is not that for which we act or do any thing, but comes to associate, and steals in while we do some good work, in order to deprive us, at least, of a part of the merit. The *servant* is that one which comes when the good work is already done; and coming after it is done, it cannot deprive that good work of its merit, but can only make us fall into pride for what has been already done. Now the saint says, that if we have no *pride* for our *end* when we do any good work, there is no fear for the *companion* and the *servant*, because we, though importuned by them, may tell them repeatedly that we do not want either their *company* or their *service*, and banish them away from us. *Patience*, then, with all your temptations, calmness of mind and heart; and recollect always that the edifice of christian perfection cannot be built in a few days or weeks. That to destroy old habits and to acquire new ones, is the effect of long and repeated efforts. That we have to put our trust in God more than in our own exertions, and that if we will be firm in our good resolutions, and persevere in the work, we shall certainly succeed. To become a professor in virtue, is a work more difficult and longer than to become so in music, or in any other mental acquirement. Do not then omit your prayers at all. Do not care about what others will say: and if the enemy tempts you with importunity, it is a very good sign, and you must be very glad of it, because the same St. Philip says, that when God Almighty intends to enrich a soul with the gifts of some virtue, He permits her beforehand to be tempted with the contrary vice. Make, then, constant acts of humility, but with calmness, and sweetness, and patience. Ask constantly humility from God, and Christ, and His blessed Mother, and repeat often the three prayers which you

will find in the end of the Missal, among the many prayers there added for the grace of humility.

"Pray for me always, and believe me your obedient servant,

"ALOYSIUS GENTILI."

Having thus instructed his penitent how to persevere in doing good without being discouraged by temptations, he passes to recommend her a spirit of discretion in her spiritual exercises, and a great care in the fulfilment of the duties of her state. The letter which was written on the feast of the virgin and martyr, St. Bibiana, is as follows.

"MY DEAR MRS.

"Your letter is full of petitions, and pious souls are very industrious in finding reasons to forward them. St. Anthony decided once in a great conference with his monks, that *discretion* is the first of all virtues, and to overload oneself with prayers, may offend against that virtue in many ways. I will, however, grant you, 1st, that you should make the five visits in honour of St. Joseph, provided they be not longer than a quarter of an hour each, and do not follow your other usual visits to the Blessed Sacrament, so that you do not remain for half an hour continually before the altar. 2dly. That you should perform the novena for the Immaculate Conception by saying twelve Hail Maries, adding to each, '*Regina sine labe concepta ora pro nobis*,' and no more. 3dly. That you should perform the three days retreat. But you must pay attention not to neglect any of your domestic duties, not to prolong any exercise beyond the half hour, viz., that neither reading, nor meditation, nor any other spiritual exercises, should go beyond that time; and that if you

feel it after the first or second day to be too much for you, you give it up altogether. As to the hour watching before the Blessed Sacrament, I do not see that I can grant it for the present. The first time I have the pleasure of seeing you, I will talk the matter over with you, and then we shall see what you can do about it.

“As to your distractions they are not really so, because the fulfilment of your duties as the mother of a family, is the fulfilment of God’s will; and Christ has said, that not every one who says ‘*Lord Lord*’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but that he who does the will of our Father who is in heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven. If God Almighty permits you to be distracted with the care of your family, He wants you to perform a little more the part of Martha, than that of Mary; and the former has brought a great many to heaven as well as the latter. You have to fear nothing, then, from the many cares of your family. Offer them often to Almighty God in union with those of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, and every thing will be right. Be not discouraged at your ill temper or spirit of contradiction, but recollect always the advice I gave you of having a little patience with your own defects and faults, because it is not an easy work to become a saint, and to get out of our misery. You are not to imagine that the saints become so in a few days, or by resolutions only, but by persevering in a desperate battle against their self love and corruption. So you are not to think yourself privileged above them. Have patience with yourself, and you shall in the end obtain the victory.

“Remember me kindly to all your good family, and believe me always

“Your most obedient servant in Christ,

“A. GENTILI.”

The next letter which he addressed to the same person on the feast of St. Aloysius, is directed to teach her in what solid christian perfection does really consist, and how a soul attains to virtuous habits.

“My dear Sister in Christ, whose holy grace, light, and charity, be always with us. Amen.

“Now I begin to say for your consolation, that *I do really believe* that the day will come when you shall be *really good*. But I must repeat to you what I have already said other times, namely, that goodness is the result of possessing all Christian virtues, but that virtues are *habits*, and habits cannot be acquired in a few days or weeks, that we cannot expect consequently to become good in a few days, or months. You may recollect that when you were at school, you did not acquire the habit of playing on the pianoforte, or singing, or of any work in a few days, and that sometimes you thought, perhaps, that you could never succeed in learning several things, which afterwards you did learn. Now I must tell you that it is much more difficult to learn how to practise humility, patience, charity, &c., than to learn any art or science. So have patience with yourself. To wish to become good at once, in order to redeem the lost time, would be the same as to pretend to learn a language in a few days, because one has been negligent in his lessons for several months or years. You say that since you saw me you have done “*no good at all*.” But I say, first, that we do a great deal of good *without its being known*; and secondly, that if you have not fallen into mortal sin, you have done a great good indeed, and if you have not fallen into voluntary venial sins, or but into a few of them, you have done a *greater good*, even because the real good is not to offend the *Infinite Good*. How-

ever, to feel so unhappy, because you do not all things that *you imagine* Almighty God wishes from you, is a temptation, and a little self-love. I say you imagine, because, for instance, I do not believe that Almighty God wishes from you that you should ALWAYS eat what you *like least*. This may be a great INDISCRETION in a married lady, not to say that such a practice may gradually spoil your appetite and stomach, and ruin your health. That sometimes you should mortify yourself in such a way is very commendable, but so to do always, *I must decidedly forbid it you*. Thus you see that your grief has no ground, and so likewise the fear that all this will be for your greater condemnation. 'Do not believe,' says the Holy Ghost, '*every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are from God.*' It is one of the arts of the enemy to make people believe many things to be from God which we cannot do, in order to disturb our mind, and discourage us altogether from serving God. Again, when persons are not quite well, they have already their mortification sent to them by God, which is better than any voluntary one, and the saints during any illness gave up all their penances. And I must add, that the marriage state for women is a sufficient penance, and for the most of the time a sufficient mortification, and that not little. To expect that you SHALL NEVER be humble, arises from too much confidence in yourself, and it is against the virtue of hope. If you put your trust in God, you will find that what is impossible to nature is not only possible, but also easy to divine grace.

"Believe me, always, whilst I implore over you and your family, the choicest blessings,

"Yours in Christ,

"A. GENTIL."

For a greater confirmation of what he had stated in this letter respecting the manner of attaining the virtuous habits, on the feast of St. Lawrence he wrote to her again as follows.

“My dear Sister in Christ Jesus, whose holy grace, peace, and charity, may be always with us. You may write to me whenever you like, and propose any question whatever you like, but you must always recollect that sanctity is not the work of one day, nor of a resolution, and that discouragement many times arises from expecting to acquire habits, which must be purchased with great expenditure, at a very low price. The habit of any virtue cannot be acquired, but by many and many acts; hence we are not to think that we may become Saints by resolving on becoming so only. And if we, finding after a few days that we cannot keep our resolutions, should conclude that we shall never be able to do so, we should be as wrong in our conclusions as if we should say that we shall never be able to become professors of music, because after a few days that we have begun to play or to sing, we cannot succeed in playing or singing like the best professors. Consider how ‘the earth bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.’

“Now from this you see, first, that things must grow in the soul gradually, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; and, secondly, that there is a growth which we do not know, and which cannot be perceived till after many years. Now you would not feel yourself inclined to say that the full corn shall never be in the ear because it is not to be found in the blade. Moreover, Christ says, in the parable of the seed which is cast into the good ground, that they who are figured by this last shall bear fruit, not at once,

but *in patience*. Have patience then. You must have your 'sleep' and your 'rising,' and in time, fruit shall be found in abundance.

"I insist always upon one point, because I know that the enemy discourages many by this *very impatience to do everything at once*.

"Pray for me, and believe me always,

"Yours in Christ,

"A. GENTILI."

On the Sexagesima Sunday of the next year, 1847, whilst he was engaged in preaching a mission at Stockton, he thus wrote to the same person.

"*Stockton,*

"*Sexagesima Sunday, 1847.*

"MY DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,

"Now that the whole storm is passed, and I suppose that you are already up, and quite well, let me congratulate with you for the little angel the Lord has given to you. I hope that He will make him grow in grace and wisdom, as His Beloved Son, before Him and before men, that he, the little angel, may one day be one of the happy citizens of heaven, and increase the number of the subjects of the Eternal King! I hope that you are quiet, and free from all anxieties, either concerning your prayers, or any other thing that you would like to do better, or to be able to accomplish. Recollect always that sanctity does not consist in praying, but in loving God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves, and that the love of God does not consist in feelings, or in keeping ourselves always in prayer and recollection, but in doing His will by keeping His commandments. Christ says, "*he who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me,*

and he shall be loved by my Father, and We will come and make our abode in him.' He, then, who endeavours to keep the commandments of Christ, advances in sanctity, because he advances in the love of God, which being, as divines teach, a *love of preference*, does not consist in bare affections, but in a determined will rather to lose everything than offend Him in any way whatsoever. From this you will see that two great elements of Divine love and sanctity are, first, the avoiding every occasion of sin, and, second, the fulfilling all the duties of one's own state. Now the chief duty of your state is the sanctification of your little flock, and God Almighty has now sent to you another little lamb. It is very important that you should recollect how *fortitude* is the first virtue and praise of a saintly woman in your state. So we read in the lesson for the Mass of married saints. '*Mulierem fortem quis inveniet? procul, et de ultimis finibus pretium ejus.*' Now fortitude is to be employed, first of all, in bearing our own defects; in never being discouraged, and in gradually overcoming ourselves, that dying to ourselves, we may live to God, and find ourselves again in Him. To bear our miseries without impatience and discouragement, is a great virtue, and, if we have no virtue, let our first virtue be to bear with humility and patience our poverty and destitution of every virtue.

"Pray for me, and believe me always,

"Yours in Christ,

"ALOYSIUS GENTILI."

The last two letters which Father Gentili wrote to the pious lady, who used to set the greatest value upon his advice, tend to comfort her in her tribulations, to keep her firm to the point of fulfilling the duties of

her state with every possible perfection, and to urge her above all things to the practice of sincere christian humility. The first of these bears the date of the feast of St. Lawrence, 1847, and is as follows.

“My dear Sister in Christ, whose holy grace, peace, and charity be always with us. Amen.

“If God Almighty has visited your children with infirmities it is a good sign; because, first, as it is written, virtue is perfected in infirmity; and secondly, we read in the lives of several holy mothers, that Almighty God visited them very often, either with the infirmity or with the loss of their children. He deprived holy Job of them all, and so also the mother of the Maccabees, and St. Symphorosa, and St. Felicitas. Those, however, were eminent and extraordinary saints, and we are not treated like them, because we have not yet arrived at their great perfection. Let us, nevertheless, thank God for the little progress we have made, and if sometimes we find ourselves to have paused a little in the way of sanctity, or gone back, we are not to be discouraged. The people of God went backwards and forwards in the wilderness several times, but those who persevered entered at last into the promised land. The resolutions you have made in behalf of your children are very good, since it is certain that mothers are blessed by the generation of children, if they persevere in their fidelity to God; and this depends a great deal on the care that mothers take to initiate them in the way to sanctity, and to fulfil this great mission they have from their state of sanctifying them and bringing them up for heaven. Now in order to begin to answer the many things you say concerning your soul, I must begin to lay down this principle, which you must never forget, viz: “that sanctity and progress in sanctity does not consist in

having our minds in a continual act of remembrance or contemplation of God. When we are in heaven we shall never be distracted, because we shall see God Almighty face to face; but here on earth, we must at times feel the reaction of our infirmity and weakness, that we may be humble, which is the foundation of all sanctity. Christ has said: '*He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me.*' He, then, who does not break the commandments of God is the true lover of God. Now you say that you believe that you do not really wilfully do anything that you know displeases God, at least seldom, and in only small things. This ought to satisfy you for the present, and if sometimes, because of the distractions of the world, you cannot meditate, and pray, and walk in the presence of God as you do at other times, you are not to think that you go back, that everything is lost, that you have no merit, and that you feel as if you had done no good whatsoever. The maxims of perfection say, in the beginning, that a christian must not be vexed or discouraged if external things make us, at times, feel their power, and distract us for a little; but that he must return to himself, and repair his union with God, and continue his journey. You must know, moreover, that as long as you are so afraid of going back as you say, there is no real danger whatever of it; and as to your wish and prayer that you might some day be ready to suffer anything rather than not do in the smallest thing what God wishes, if you will have patience with yourself, you will, no doubt, God Almighty assisting you, accomplish it. As to humility, which you mention over again and again in your letter, ask it constantly from God and from His Blessed Mother, and if you will persevere in begging for it,

you will obtain it, and will obtain it when your charity for God shall begin to be perfect.

“Pray for me always, and believe me,

“Yours truly, in Christ,

“A. GENTILI.”

Here follows the last letter which he addressed to the same person.

“Bradford, 1848.

“*Feast of the Purification of the B. V. M.*

“You are always pilfering permission for prayers, but now you must recollect that you have got enough. Nothing better than prayers, but we must recollect, that humility is the great ingredient of all sanctity; and a sincere act of humility is more valuable before God than many prayers, and more calculated to obtain patience, calmness, and every christian virtue than many devotions read in books for our consolation. There is a great difference between knowing the theories of christian virtues and practising them. This we must do and not omit the other. He who is humble is a saint, and few prayers are necessary to him in order to be heard by the Lord. We see it in the prayer that the woman of Canaan made to Christ. She prayed first and was not heard; she humbled herself and repeated her prayer in a very humble manner. Christ, who had seemed to despise her, heard her at once. So likewise He did with the Centurion. He said, when Christ offered to go and visit his servant, that he was not worthy to receive Him under his roof, and Christ performed instantly the requested miracle; and so the prayer of the crucified thief, and that of the Publican were heard, because coming from a profound sense of their humility. Endeavour then while you are so anxious about your prayers, to be so

likewise in laying down more every year the great foundation of all sanctity, that you may build its edifice on a firm rock. He who is humble has all graces, and he who is humble has patience, meekness, self-denial, and every christian virtue; he soon arrives at the perfection of charity, and begins to foretaste on earth the calmness and the happiness of heaven.

“Pray for me, that I may obtain so great a blessing, lest, while I preach to others, I should become a cast-away.

“Your humble servant,
“A. GENTILI.”

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER GENTILI RETURNS AGAIN TO IRELAND—HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH IN THE IRISH METROPOLIS.

CCXXVII. Although he had several times crossed the Channel on his way to various parts of Ireland, Father Gentili had never sojourned long, as a missionary, in the Irish capital. Towards the end of April, he and his colleague, Father Furlong, returned thither with the intention of making a lengthened stay, in order to preach missions similiar to those which had already taken place in the principal towns of England, and thus comply with the earnest wishes and entreaties of several persons, both lay and ecclesiastical. In St. Audeon's parish Church, Dublin, on the first of May, they commenced their first mission, which lasted till the end of the month. After a short interval, they

began another mission, of equal length, in the parish of Rathmines. Incredible were the exertions of the zealous missionaries, and according to written memoirs, prodigious were the operations of divine grace, as well as most extraordinary the beneficial effects among the people. The confessionals were surrounded by crowds desirous of approaching the tribunal of penance: some had the patience to wait at the Church door all night, in order that, at the re-opening of the Church in the morning, their turn might come first. Many who had been for a long time enemies, and not even upon saluting terms, were seen to ask for mutual reconciliation; stolen goods were restored—houses of ill fame were closed—bad books and pictures were burnt—persons sinfully cohabiting together were united in lawful wedlock—and an end was put to not a few scandalous and sacrilegious disorders. Divers persons were moved to renounce the world altogether, and to consecrate themselves to the Lord's service. About a hundred Protestants were converted to the true faith; and among the Catholics there was such an increase of fervour, that, during the two missions, it is calculated there were not less than forty thousand communions. A public and triumphant procession, in which the most Holy Sacrament was visibly carried for the first time since protestantism had commenced its reign in the island, was particularly impressive, and concluded the spiritual exercises.

CCXXVIII. However useful these extraordinary toils might prove to the souls of others, they were evidently not calculated to promote Father Gentili's bodily welfare. It has been already observed more than once, that his constitution was naturally delicate, and that the frequent ailments through which he had passed, were any thing but presages of a long life.

Neither was it to be expected that in the process of time his health might become more sound and vigorous; since, from his youth, he had accustomed himself to a scanty diet, and that not very nutritious, abstaining from the use of flesh, and wine. Moreover, the fervour of his spirit induced him to weaken his body by such voluntary mortifications and penitential austerities, as disciplines, hair shirts, vigils, and fasts. It was, therefore, easy to predict that his weak frame would not hold out long under the weight of those many labours and exertions, which we have already enumerated; with grief his superiors beheld the deterioration of his health, and that his strength of body did not keep pace with the vigour of his mind. They had several times endeavoured to persuade him to go on with greater moderation; and to give more rest and solace to his attenuated frame. But eaten up by zeal for the salvation of souls, he either felt not, or cared not, for his own peril and suffering; nay, he desired to lay down life for his brethren. Before his last voyage to Ireland, the Father Provincial having represented to him his need of repose, Father Gentili, with charitable warmth, replied, that feeling himself quite well, he required no rest, more especially since Heaven had invited him as it were to redouble his efforts, by frequent offers of new missionary undertakings: and so saying, he exhibited a long list of towns and places from which requests had come for the prompt exercise of his evangelical zeal. Another time, his superior tried to induce him to dispense with the Lenten fast during the mission; but, with a holy dexterity, he eluded the suggestion of his spiritual father, who somewhat reluctantly yielded the point.

CCXXIX. Notwithstanding his weak state of health, about the commencement of September his

ardour urged him to undertake a third Dublin mission in the Parish Church of St. John. This edifice was situate in the poorest, and most insalubrious part of the city. In that particular quarter, there then prevailed the typhus fever, which had already carried off not a few victims, especially among the lower classes. On which account, several benevolent and discreet persons tried to dissuade him from preaching a mission in so wretched and dangerous a place. But the pious missionary, instead of giving way to their advice, replied, that in mournful as well as in agreeable localities, there were souls to be saved, and he went on sermonizing, instructing, and administering the sacraments, as if his body had the strength and durability of bronze. Withal, on the 16th day of the aforesaid month, while seated in the confessional, he suddenly felt a violent febrile attack, and finding himself unequal to the attention required in the discharge of his ministry, he retired to his lodgings in the conventual abode of the Augustinian Fathers. Enveloped in his cloak he reclined on a sofa until the return home of his colleague, who, on learning the symptoms of his indisposition, viz. shivering fits, head ache, and debility, advised him to go to bed without delay. With this counsel the sick man complied, in the hope that a night's repose might restore his wonted energies. However, this expectation was not realized, for next day the patient grew worse: he was then visited by a physician, who did not, it seems, think the distemper very dangerous. After a few days, without any remarkable alteration either for the better or the worse, an inflammation in the throat began to develope itself: but this was soon checked by medical remedies, so that on the 24th, the patient appeared out of all danger, and nearly convalescent, to the great joy of his acquaint-

ances and friends, who were alarmed at the peril of losing so great a man.

CCXXX. Alas! how vain are human hopes! On the evening of the same day, the fever violently returned, and renewed the grief and despondency of the assistants, for the sick man's pulsation beat so rapidly, that all the nerves and fibres of his body were kept in continual motion. His colleague, Father Furlong, was prevented from remaining with him during that day, owing to his being obliged to attend to the spiritual wants of some poor people, who were on the point of emigrating to America. His place, however, was amply supplied by a pious Matron, who, out of respect for the sick missionary, joined the Infirmarian in supplying his wants, with maternal and religious affection. As the distemper increased in malignity, a medical consultation, to which was invited a Doctor of great repute, was held, and it was unanimously decided that, either amelioration or death would take place, in a few hours.

CCXXXI. While every possible assistance was afforded to the ailments of the body by fresh remedies, which seemed to relieve, the care of the sick man's soul was not neglected. The reception of the last sacraments was proposed, and to this proposal he most cordially acceded. To Father Furlong, with singular sentiments of piety and compunction, he made a general confession of his whole life; after which, the most Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction were administered. Although he had been in a delirium the whole of the previous day, during the performance of the Divine mysteries, he recovered, and retained unto the end his presence of mind. While his infirmity lasted, his attendants remarked the three following circumstances: first, that he never gave a sign of disgust, or uttered a word of impatience: and when asked if he

felt pain, he always answered that "he suffered nothing," although it clearly appeared that his sickness must have afflicted him not a little. Secondly, he was as docile as a child in everything prescribed, whether for body or soul. Thirdly, that even in his ravings, his expressions always referred, either to his Superior General Rosmini—or to his missions—or to other similar pious occupations. Mrs. Dolan, the beforementioned charitable matron, relates how the night preceding his death, he imagined himself addressing a congregation assembled in the Church, and that, though his voice was weak, yet he continued to talk with a certain energy, for a long time, on the ineffable ways of Divine Providence towards men; also how he declared the doctrines of the Catholic Church relative to the Theological virtues, Faith—Hope—and Charity, as well as to the grace of Jesus Christ; and how he concluded with words to the following effect: "Let us ever bear in mind the prime end for which we were created, and direct thereunto perseveringly, all our thoughts, words, and actions, whether of commission or omission." Then, as if about to bless his audience, he raised his hands, and with his right he made the sign of the cross: after which his arms fell as if lifeless on the bed.

CCXXXII. Although he did not give vent to any complaint, he must have been greatly tormented by the burning fever which agitated his body during the night. At break of the following day, there appeared evident signs of approaching dissolution—such as a cold sweat suffusing his hitherto hot hands and face. Father Furlong, who had retired for a little rest, when apprised of his friend's condition, hastened to his bedside, and no doubt felt his heart acutely pierced at the thought of his soon being left alone to labour in the vast mystic vineyard, by the departure of his beloved

companion for paradise. Seeing that mere human succour was useless, he went immediately to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, in order to obtain from on high, the grace necessary for his friend's last struggle with the enemy, and to facilitate his transit from earth to heaven. Returning after Mass, he found Father Gentili still alive, but speechless—and motionless, except his eyes, which were occasionally lifted heavenward, with an expression of faith, hope, love, and confidence in God. The prayers for the agonizing were then recited, and the last absolution with plenary indulgence *in articulo mortis* imparted to the dying. All these pious rites being accomplished, and having in a tranquil dignified manner composed his members, the expiring missionary, whose respiration had become difficult, at length sweetly breathed his last sigh, while the Augustinian friars and other priests were praying for him in the Church.

“The angels (as Mrs. Dolan adds in her account of Father Gentili's sickness and death) who watched around his bed, and the Queen of Angels (who was doubtless present) received his pure soul enriched with merits, and presented it to Christ for its crown of eternal bliss. For him I could not pray, but I petitioned the blessed spirits then assisting his soul, to succour me also at the terrible moment of my departure from this world. Oh I felt myself to be in great and glorious company at the hour of that Saint's death! To me it proved a great consolation, and it ever will be a subject of perpetual joy, to have assisted that saint in his last moments. It was an honour and a privilege which many persons would have coveted to enjoy, but the Lord in His mercy reserved it for me—for me alone.”

CCXXXIII. Thus from earth's tearful valley de-

parted the Rev. Aloysius Gentili, on the 26th of September, 1848, at the age of forty-seven years, three months, and 12 days: of his mortal course, seventeen years had been consumed in the Institute of Charity; thirteen years of his life had been spent as apostolic missionary in England; and about four years in the last office with which he was invested, as Itinerant Missionary. As far back as the year 1833, Gentili once said to a pious friend: "You will see, dear sister, that I shall terminate my days in England. Beg of the Lord that I may have the grace to die a martyr. O! what a consolation would it not be to give my blood for the conversion of souls redeemed by Jesus, and to die by the hands of the executioner!" These words, if not literally, were partly verified; for combating valiantly against error and vice, he fell on the battle field of apostolic labour, with spiritual arms in his hands, sinking indeed, prematurely under continual toils, endured for charity and faith.

CHAPTER X.

LETTERS AND TESTIMONIALS CONCERNING FATHER GENTILI.

CCXXXIV. Before proceeding to describe the magnificent obsequies, and funeral honours publicly awarded to the deceased missionary, the insertion here of certain testimonials may not be irrelevant, to show the general sorrow elicited by Father Gentili's demise, as well as the esteem in which he was universally held. Dividing them into two classes, we propose to give in

the first place, a select number written by devout lay persons; reserving for the second division, some epistolary documents from the Clergy, both secular and regular. We will begin with Mrs. and Miss Dolan's letters, which were addressed to the Mother Superioress of the convent at York, and which are replete with that tenderness of sentiment, which is so commendable in Catholic Ladies.

"Dublin, 28th September, 1848.

"DEAR MOTHER,

"Although I am not just now in a fit condition for writing letters, yet I cannot refrain from sending these few lines, which I have written under the tremendous tribulation with which it has pleased the Lord to afflict us in punishment for our sins. We were too unworthy to possess that great treasure—that dear Saint, upon this earth. O that we could begin at least to practise what he taught and preached at the cost of injuring his precious health—and even with the loss of his life! That dear saint was discouraged by all his friends from giving missions in St. John's church, but he nevertheless made a beginning. The day on which he commenced it, before leaving our house, I said to him: 'That horrible place will kill you.' 'Kill me? No:' he replied, 'there are souls to be saved in horrible as well as in agreeable places.' That dear angel had no strength to resist the attacks of disease. He was a man of wonderful talent—a perspicacious mind—and of a warm and noble heart; but his body was wretchedly weak, and worn out, &c."

CCXXXV.

"Dublin, 27th September, 1848.

"DEAR REV. MOTHER,

"O my dear Mother, what shall I say about our

loss? It has struck me in such a way, that I can hardly believe it true! What shall we do without him? Where shall we find another Abate Gentili? There is not another being like him in the world! What an affliction it is to think that he should be deprived of life in an age still vigorous, in the midst of a career which still seemed to hold out to him a long existence. But is it right that we should grieve because a saint is gone to receive his crown? and O what a crown! His toils and sufferings are now at an end; and I feel that if we have lost a guide and friend upon earth, we have acquired a powerful protector in heaven.

"My father, sister, and the other little ones, have just returned from seeing the deceased. The body was vested with clerical robes, covered with flowers, and the countenance was placid and beautiful to behold. The bier was conveyed over the heads of the multitude by ten or twelve men, and the pressure was so great as to resemble the waves of the sea, and the expressions of sorrow are indescribable. I would have undergone any privation to join the others, but I thought it was more than I could endure, &c."

The next letter is from Mrs. Washington Hibbert, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Pagani.

CCXXXVI.

"*Bilton Grange, Oct. 6th.*

"My dear Rev. Father,—I have been wishing to write to you ever since the death of dear, saintly, Dr. Gentili, but I have been so deeply grieved and afflicted at our irreparable loss, that I have not had the courage to do so; but I am sure *you* will believe how warmly *I* sympathise *with you* in this heavy affliction. God *only* knows the *extent* of the loss *I* and *all* my family have

sustained in our saintly director's death. We *owe* him so much; and under God, he was entirely the means of my dear husband's conversion; and ever since he has been received into the one Holy Catholic Church, he has been longing so ardently to see his dear, valued friend to whom he was so much indebted, and to consult him on many points; but this blessing was denied him. However, we must be grateful to Almighty God all the days of our lives for having, in His infinite mercy and goodness, permitted us the inexpressible grace and favour of enjoying the friendship of so great and holy an apostle as blessed Dr. Gentili. Certainly England has lost its brightest ornament, as far as religion is concerned.

"We had a solemn Requiem Mass celebrated for dear Dr. Gentili, on Monday; *not* that I think he requires *our* prayers, (for I firmly believe that he is now interceding for us, his poor disconsolate children and penitents, at the throne of mercy and grace,) but it is the last act of respect and gratitude we shall ever be permitted to pay him in this world, and this is what Mr. Hibbert and I seem most anxious to do.

"Many thanks, my dear Rev. Father, for your kindness in allowing Father Hopkins to come here on Saturday; it is a favour for which we are most obliged, and we are delighted with him, he is *so good* and *so humble*, he always gives us great edification.

"I am very anxious to know if the holy relics of this *second* 'St. Aloysius' have been brought over to this country. I do hope *you* will *not* allow them to remain in Ireland; and if you should translate them to Ratcliffe to be deposited there, Mr. Hibbert and I would consider it the *greatest* privilege and blessing to be permitted to attend the funeral service. But

this we must submit to *your* indulgence and good judgment.

"Believe me always, my dear Rev. Father,

"Yours sincerely grateful and respectfully in Christ,

"JULIA HIBBERT."

The following was addressed to the Rev. Father Pagani by the Superioress of a convent, distinguished for piety and discipline:

CCXXXVII. "Jesus + Mary

"Joseph.

"A. M. D. G.

"Thoughts penned as a tribute of gratitude to the memory of the beloved, revered, and ever to be lamented, Father Aloysius Gentili.

"Though all christian and religious virtues grounded on profound humility and rigid self-denial, were conspicuous in the character of this venerable servant of God, it seemed that ardent charity to God and his neighbour, and extraordinary devotion to the glorious mother of God, shone most brilliantly in him.

"The fire of divine love which burned in his own breast animated each word of the heavenly instructions he so often gave us. He had a singular talent for enlightening and convincing the minds of his hearers; floods of light seemed to pour into the soul when listening to the words of life that fell from his lips. His first retreats made so lasting an impression on the mind, that it seemed as if the Sun of Truth had been previously eclipsed, and that it had been reserved to this holy missionary to disperse the cloud which had enveloped it. For God alone he lived and breathed, and to extend the reign of His pure love in all hearts seemed his only aim. It may truly be said of Father Gentili, that 'the zeal of God's house devoured him;'

that burning flames consumed him. The evils that were caused by heresy, schism, and infidelity, weighed heavily on his mind, and for the last few months of his mortal career, his prolonged exile seemed to him a martyrdom. But how express his ardent filial love for Mary? This revered Father seems to have been raised up in these latter days to revive solid devotion to heaven's lovely queen. He maintained her prerogatives with dignity and unwearied ardour; on *her* praises he loved to dwell; it was always sweet to him to speak of his dear Mother, (as he said,) to whom, under God, he was indebted for all the graces he had received. Thousands may bless the day they first heard his exhortations to take Mary for their mother. The great devotion and love for this Blessed Mother, now so remarkable in one of the principal colleges in this country, owe their origin to Father Gentili's first retreat amongst them. This the members themselves acknowledge; and, moreover, add, that every blessing has followed; that their present happiness and prosperity, are, under God, owing to the labours of this apostolical man amongst them; for never was he weary in inculcating solid devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God. A Superioress of a religious community once asked the holy Father to preach in the convent chapel; he instantly assented, and dwelt for a very considerable length of time on his favourite subject: 'Devotion to Mary.' The Superioress afterwards discovered that the good Father was suffering from indisposition; she humbly apologised for having asked him to preach, and expressed her regret that he should have fatigued himself by giving so lengthened a discourse. He replied: 'Oh, how could I feel tired when I had such a subject to speak on!' Through the Mother, he conducted souls to her divine Son Jesus, in whom all his

love, all his hopes were centered; and, Oh, who can forget the reverential conduct of this lamented Father in the presence of the most adorable Sacrament! The tone of his voice, every action, spoke of that lively faith, that ardent love with which he was animated. In how many places has he not renewed the custom of frequent often, of daily communion! All who heard him, all who saw him, may ever bless our bountiful Creator for such a boon! But if all ranks and conditions have reason to be thankful, religious persons should be foremost in their unbounded gratitude. What zeal, what charity, did he not display in his efforts to lead them to the perfection of their sublime vocation! A perfect religious himself, living on this earth more the life of an angel than a human being, the *old man* as completely crucified and dead as is possible on this side of the grave; all felt and knew that he practised all that he preached! Time only permits one sentence more to hundreds that might be added. May the seeds by his hands sown, fructify and bring forth fruit that may multiply a thousand fold; and thus, till time shall be no more, may new gems be daily added to that never-fading crown of glory, which, doubtless, has now long been the portion of this venerable servant of Christ in the realms of bliss above."

The following letters were written by some nuns to the said Superioress:

CCXXXVIII. "A. M. D. G.

"Words cannot express how profound, how lasting, was the impression made upon the minds and hearts of those who had the happiness of assisting at the spiritual exercises of the deeply-lamented, and never to be forgotten, Dr. Gentili.

"While listening to his sublime instructions, the

mind seemed transported into some new region, whence viewing, in the clear and beautiful picture his masterly hand had drawn, the grandeur of our holy religion, the majesty of its dogmas, and the sublimity of the end of every christian soul, it was constrained to acknowledge that its vocation was indeed an exalted one. The most striking thing in the saintly Doctor's eloquence, was the divine inspiration that breathed throughout. He presented the truths of faith in a new and almost dazzling light; he spoke to the understanding; fully convinced and satisfied that faculty, and then the will, as if constrained by some irresistible power, felt unable to withhold its consent from what he proposed. Yet in the midst of all this, the preacher did not appear; or if he did appear, it was only as the inspired organ of the Holy Ghost speaking the truths of religion, and laying down the maxims of the gospel with the authority of one invested from on high. His utter contempt of human applause and human respect, showed that he preached not himself but his Divine Master. His retreat was calculated to leave an indelible impression. He sought in his various discourses, with all the deep persuasiveness of his extraordinary eloquence, with all the force of his cogent reasoning, and with that unction of spirit so peculiar to him, to show forth the end of our being, dwelling with great energy on the yearnings of the human heart after happiness, and bemoaning with deep pathos the blindness of those who falsely imagine to find that happiness in limited goods; then he would, with playful sarcasm, hold up to contempt the follies and vanities of the world, dividing its votaries into three classes: those who sought happiness in power, wisdom, and pleasure. He showed the utter impossibility of those things, though possessed in the highest degree, to

satisfy the heart of man, which infinitude alone could fill. Then with that authority and power which nothing could resist, he would insist on the necessity of the soul's seeking its happiness in God alone. There was something deeply impressive in the manner in which he spoke of the sublimity of man's soul. The soul, he said, was created to share the very attributes of the Divinity; its ambition should be satisfied with nothing less than the possession of the power of God omnipotent, its desire of knowledge gratified with the very wisdom of God, and its love of pleasure fully satiated in the enjoyment of the eternal beauty, and riches, and bounty, and goodness of that Being whose infinite perfections alone could fill the soul's capacity. So vividly did he seem to feel the eternal truths he uttered, and so deeply penetrated was he with the unsubstantiality of all created things, that he imparted something of his spirit to those who heard him. There was nothing studied in his words or manner; he seemed rather to be speaking under some divine influence, yet the clearness and beautiful arrangement of his discourses made it almost impossible to forget them. He was accustomed to recall, in few words, the preceding discourse; then he would continue to develop his subject, illustrating it with beautiful examples and striking sentences from the sacred Scriptures and holy Fathers with whom he was perfectly familiar. The good seed which the holy Doctor so abundantly sowed in his retreat was not destined to fall profitless. It produced a rich return of fruits. A complete change was wrought, not only in the sentiments and ideas, but likewise in the conduct of many. To some even it was doubtless a means of eternal salvation, for they died soon after in most edifying sentiments of piety."

CCXXXIX.

" DEAREST REV. MOTHER,

" It is under sensations of no ordinary nature I hasten to comply with the desire you have expressed in reference to our beloved, deeply lamented, and saintly Dr. Gentili, feeling as I do that saints only are competent fitly to treat of saints, and convinced as I am that whatever can be said will fall far short of the reality. I do not deem it an easy task to convey anything like an adequate idea of the many virtues and qualifications of this eminent servant of God. From the happy period of his first blessed visit to St. Mary's there has been but one idea dwelling amongst us with respect to dear Dr. Gentili, the impression of his eminent sanctity. Who could inhale the sweet odours of the many virtues that flourished in him, and not participate in the feelings which the diffusion of their fragrance was naturally calculated to inspire? Who could behold him in almost prostrate adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and not feel the inward lamp of their faith re-enkindled and increased? Who could see him kneeling in private prayer, and not feel themselves forcibly drawn into the presence of that Divine Being in whom his whole soul seemed centred and absorbed? Nothing but obedience could tear me from the Chapel when Dr. Gentili was there; for to see him in prayer was more to me, and did more in reality for me, than the study of the most lengthened treatise on the subject could do. Who could look upon him otherwise than as one eminently gifted, both by nature and grace—one in whom qualifications and endowments of the highest standing were united with the most attractive engaging condescension and simplicity of manners? Always cheerful, affable, easy of access, gentle, and humble in his whole deportment,

such it evidently was his study (with the great Apostle,) to become all to all, that he might gain all to Him whose minister and servant it was his own happy privilege and glory to be. An utter stranger to self, he did not seem to know what it was to consult, for a moment, his own ease or convenience; always ready to sacrifice and lend himself to the call of charity, deeming it a happiness and glory to spend himself, and be spent, for the good of his neighbour. In private he was a true Father, a kind consoler, an able physician, and experienced guide; insinuating, meek, and engaging, he could draw the whole soul to unburden itself with ease to him—could elucidate the most obscure points with the utmost facility, drawing the heart by the powerful attraction of sweetness, gentleness, and tranquil charity, to the relish and pursuit of all perfection. Dr. Gentili was not only humble, but a lover of humiliation, which he considered as the solid foundation and support of that lovely, but difficult virtue, as also the shortest road to its attainment. He told me he had made an abstract, or practical compendium of Rodengue's Treatise on Humility, for his own use.

“I wish I could fitly paint Dr. G.'s angelic modesty, his religious recollection, his easy reserve, his custody of senses; the guard he kept on his eyes I particularly remarked. With what pleasure can I recall the delightful hours he passed with us! So gentlemanly, yet so saintly, his conversation full of instruction, of pious anecdote, and stimulus to all virtues, in turn always cheerful and rejoicing, but evidently in the presence of God. Telling him, in course of private communication, of the extreme difficulty I perceived within me to contradiction, or a slighting word here and there received, he would immediately descend to a level with me, detail his own repugnances for my encouragement,

and then show me so sweetly what method he pursued, in order to overcome, thus seizing an opportunity of practising the virtue he was endeavouring to foster in me. Of his sublime eloquence scarcely a true picture can be drawn. In Dr. Gentili eloquence did not seem the result of study, or an acquirement, but as natural to him as to breathe or walk, &c. No preparation was needful to him. After being engaged for hours in the Confessional, he could enter the Chapel, invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit, and deliver some of the most exquisitely beautiful discourses that were ever given to human lips to utter, seemingly with as much ease as if he were in merely common conversation—sublimity and extent, weight and importance of subject. His delivery so pleasing and attractive, every expression so admirably chosen. Not a word of poetic prose; all pure Gospel style, beautiful beyond description. Sublimely simple. And then the dignity and grace of his action. Some competent excellent judges said that Dr. Gentili's every action was fit for the pencil of a sculptor. Indeed, this impression was so prevalent, even among Protestants, that in the Retreat given at Blake Street, the conductor of the school of design, sent his pupils to the Chapel, for the express purpose of seeing the grace and beauty of his action. If miracles be required for this dear saint's canonization, we have the most unquestionable miracle before us in the immense amount of good effected by his instrumentality. Who was it that first enkindled that flame of devotion to our sweet blessed Mother, which is now increasing and spreading its sweet influence over the whole of heretic England? Had the dogma of her Immaculate Conception ever a more zealous defender and propagator than dear saintly Dr. Gentili? And who was it that first stood forth as

the undaunted champion, defender, panegyrist, and promoter of the Religious state? How many spouses of the Lamb will shine as brilliant gems in his crown, and acknowledge that to him, under God, they owe their surpassing dignity and happiness for eternity? In Dr. Gentili the Church lost one of her brightest ornaments, and ablest supporters in this country. Did not faith assure us that the blessed will of our good God is best for us, and our only real good, one might be inclined to repine and grieve that so bright a luminary had set for ever to our horizon. He might have exclaimed, as he finished his course, I have fought the good fight, I have kept the good faith, &c. Cut off in the full tide of his glorious career, hewn down in the very zenith of his might, he fell in his proper place, the battle-field, with his arms in his hand, and his armour by his side. Since we were to lose him, I can rejoice that he fell as he did, a victim to his burning charity and zeal, amid and for the poor of Jesus, he laid down his precious life. May my soul die of the death of the just, and may my last be like unto his."

The following is from Father Gentili's pious and intimate friend, Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, of Grace Dieu.

CCXL.

"Belton Grange,

"Feast of the Stigmas of St. Francis, Oct. 4, 1848.

"MY VERY DEAR FATHER PAGANI,

"Inscrutable are the ways of God. The death of our beloved friend and Father in Christ, Dr. Gentili, was what, of all things, I least expected. I should have thought that his career was rather beginning than ending. At least, when one thought of the spiritual wants of England, and of his wonderful power to relieve them, I flattered myself that he would have

been spared, for many and many years, to gain souls to Christ. But alas! we were not worthy of this blessed Saint. 'Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa.' He had won his own crown, and we were not worthy to detain him from wearing it. His loss to England, and to the Order of Charity, is quite irreparable; but to myself personally it is a dreadful blow, a terrible affliction. In losing him I have lost a spiritual Father, a most sincere and affectionate friend, and a most kind adviser. Nothing can ever replace him to me in this world; and my only comfort is to invoke his prayers. I now continually ask our Lord for grace; 'per merita carissimi Patris Aloysii et per intercessionem ejus;' and in doing so I feel that sweet calm that gives assurance of my dear friend's love and protection being still vouchsafed to me. Yes, I am convinced that he who took such a lively interest in us when he was on earth, will not forget us now that he is in heaven. My dearest Laura is quite inconsolable at his death; she did nothing but shed tears for several days after she heard of it. It was, and ever will be, a sad thought that we should not have seen him once more.

"I am ever,

"My very dear Father Provincial,

"Your affectionate Servant in Christ,

"AMBROSE LISLE PHILLIPPS."

In another letter Mr. Phillipps thus describes Father Gentili's method of life at Grace Dieu:—

CCXLI.

"*Garendon Park,*

"*April 20, 1850.*

"MY DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,

"Nothing could be more edifying or more truly apostolical than the whole tenour of Father Gentili's

life, and every thing about it savoured of perfection and of a virtue of no common degree. What particularly struck me, was the perfection with which he performed all the daily routine of his ordinary actions: never omitting anything, however oppressed with business, or wearied with fatigue, and doing everything so *well*, the least no less than the more important acts of duty. What was very striking in that good man, was, that he never seemed to forget himself, nor the great end which ought always to be uppermost in our hearts: hence, though a most agreeable companion in conversation, quite able to enter into every question of Literature or Politics, or Science, with more than common ability, he yet never spoke on these subjects in the way that mere men of the world do, but his discourse was always that of the man of God, the man of Faith, who saw his God ever present, and who perpetually felt that he had a great and good Master to serve, and that he could do so not only on great occasions, but in little ones, and that the object and end of Christianity was to sanctify the whole man, and to pervade every portion of his nature, and to influence all its acts. This was why, while people loved Father Gentili, they also revered him, and that all, who shared his conversation, felt not only the happier but the better for it. His words and his look, and his whole deportment, brought God home to all around him, and made them feel at peace, because it made them draw nearer to God, who is the only source of true peace. The life of Father Gentili was truly a sublime life, a life of perpetual self-sacrifice. The more it is known to the faithful, the more will it stir up in their hearts the love of God and of all goodness and virtue, &c."

The following is extracted from an article inserted by Mr. Lucas in the Tablet.

“We half repent our last week’s promise, to say a few words on the death of this illustrious priest, so unequal to the subject do we feel ourselves; and yet it would hardly be becoming, to allow so important an event to pass by, even with the appearance of neglect or indifference. We confess, however, that we approach the subject with distrust, and feel in part disqualified for the task that falls to us, even by the personal knowledge we had of the deceased, and the respect and regard we bore him. We estimate too highly, both his peculiar function, and his character, to feel quite at our ease in touching what we so much reverence. What a change to turn from the current events of the day, from political strifes, to the graves of men, whose meanest actions are gilded with celestial fire. Of such an one, the Church says, ‘This is the man, who before God, worked great works, and with his whole heart, offered up praises to the Lord. He shall intercede for the sins of all the people. A man without reproach; a true worshipper of God; keeping himself from every evil work; and dwelling in his innocence.’ Truly for such a man, it is better that his works should praise him, than that unhallowed tongues should break silence on his behalf. But indeed it is not on his behalf we must speak; nor in the vain hope of adorning a great name with a few idle and transitory words. If we wish aright, we can only wish to point, as best we may, the moral of a pure and holy life, and by making it,—if we could be so fortunate,—live one day longer in the memory of some, to co-operate with the noble aspirations which made the being of his days. What we would do, if it were possible, would be to prolong, if but for one hour, the strain of heavenly music, which from his lips and life has entered into the souls of thousands; and by speaking of his worth to those

in whom it has not entered, to stir up even them to an imitation of one whom they may at least follow after, if they cannot hope to equal. The life of Dr. Gentili, with his brethren, marks an æra in the history of this corner of the Church. We have many Italian priests amongst us, thank God, of different orders and communities. But we speak of them as one body, and of him who is dead, as one whom from that body God has singled out by death as a representative of the whole class, thus drawing our attention to their labours and their functions. When we think of him, our mind wanders back to the Italy of other days. We think of twelve hundred years ago, when another idolatry profaned this island; when the faith of Christ was not known here; when the spiritual empire of St. Peter included not this island in its embrace; when our forefathers bent down in worship to devils and not to God; and when from a distant shore 'Augustine and his companions, being as it is reported nearly forty men,' hallowed the Isle of Thanet with their foot-prints, and planted the Christian mysteries among a barbarous and untaught people. What then took place amongst us, is now beginning to be repeated. The true faith expelled, spit upon, trodden down, martyred, and to the utmost limits of man's power extirpated by the sword, by fire, by prisons, by treachery, by torture, by all evil acts, now raises its head, and begins once more to be heard among the fierce people of the North. The Saxon once more begins to understand, that the worship which blind men have taught him blind, is not the worship of God; that a lie has filled his soul; and that he has grasped falsehood with his right hand; that the beliefs, the hopes, the fears, the hatreds, the loves, the prejudices of three hundred years, are false and idle; that all is void within him; that he has been fed all

this while with the east wind, and that his soul has become lean and barren with such unprofitable food. The cycle of triumphant error has run its course. The fulness of time has come upon us, and God once more sends us the heralds of His faith from the same land, across the same mountains; from the same city; from the same See; from a Pope, bearing the name, and swelling with the thoughts of him, who twelve hundred years ago laid the first stones of the English Apostolate. The fulness of time is proved, not only by the coming of the missionaries, but by the success of their labours; by the readiness of their reception; by the deep attention with which men give ear to their words; by the sinners whom they have converted, and whom they convert daily; by the zeal which they stir up; by the fire which they everywhere enkindle in the souls of men, whom, predestined to salvation, the Lord mercifully addeth to His Church. And when after great labours and mighty conquests over sin, God gathers to his fathers, though in a distant land, one of the foremost of this band of missionaries, who can help looking back to the former time, and bethinking him of that day of mourning, when from the just converted Angles, God withdrew their earliest instructors? And if this is so in the general, how has it been in the particular instance now more specially before us? Surely, he too, has borne a noble part in this great task. He came amongst us from another country, another speech, other manners and habits of mind. He came among classes of men eaten by divisions; split into parties and coteries; filled with jealousies, envies, scandals. He found amongst us different races, many hatreds, and, is it so? few loves. In what he saw, and in the natural prepossessions of an Italian ecclesiastic, trained up fifteen or twenty years ago, he

found everything to confuse people, and misdirect him. Happily from the beginning we imagine he saw the truth. The very order of which he is a member, was a sort of instruction to him, to see the true bearings of the social problems of the day, on the interests of religion within and without, in this country, as well as in other portions of the globe. Hence it was, that from the beginning, the members of his Order have spoken to the people; have endeavoured above all things to reach the hearts of the masses; conscientiously or unconscientiously, have spoken to the sympathies of the poor, not as absolving them from law and necessary restraint, but as raising them up to the dignity of law, and freeing them from all other fear; speaking also to the rich, rebuking the luxuries of the time, denouncing mammon worship, and tearing them down from the high places of their selfish enjoyments, to a more proper understanding of their dignity, duty, and position. Dr. Gentili is to be considered, not only as a preacher, but in his influence upon those with whom he conversed in private, which was not slight. In both characters the earnestness and fervour of his manner, the firmness, courage, and rectitude with which he urged the truths or opinions he had to utter, gave them the greatest weight. His unflinching honesty of purpose, his evident resolution, to tell the whole truth, where necessary, however, or to whomsoever, it might be harsh, or unpalatable; the courage with which he faced mobs when they were wrong, as well as the opinions and prejudices of society, when he knew them to be pernicious, or dangerous; the conviction which every one felt who heard him, that he was not playing a part, or trying to earn favour, or careful about losing favour, or afraid of man's censure, or anxious for anything but to bring the truth home to the

heart and conscience of his hearers; this, joined with the holiness of life, of which he had a true report, which spoke in all his features and gestures, and was carried upon the very tones of his voice, gave him, in the pulpit, an influence such as we remember to have been enjoyed by no preacher in this country, in our time, or as far back as our enquiries extend.

“Though a foreigner, and speaking with an accent which, until the hearer was used to it, rendered necessary a little unusual attention, it is wonderful how he touched the hearts and consciences of the poor. Indeed, if we must speak what we think, we should say, as a general statement, that he was more heartily loved by the poor than by those who call themselves their betters. The instinct from which, and to which he spoke, lay, as all true things do lie, deeper in the hearts of the poor. No doubt, rich, wealthy, and comfortable people, may have great holiness; but to the poor the gospel is preached; they need it; they long and thirst for it; they can least endure a counterfeit gospel; they must have it in all the awful plenitude of its love and terrors; and that very destitute condition which places them in such fearful proximity with the facts of this life, and with the Providence of God, makes them keen to detect any sham, imperfect, mutilated, unearnest, or merely scholastic or theoretic gospel that may be unhappily propounded to them. Rich people are pleased when they are flattered, when their consciences are soothed, when oil is poured on the fluctuations of their half awakened souls. For them life is a comfortable thing, from which hardships and austerity are carefully banished. But for the poor life is a terrible reality; either full of hardships, or with suffering at the next door; separated from purgatory, if at all, by a very thin partition; and therefore little

tolerant of half truths, or half earnestness; capable, God knows, of being stone blind to religion, and hardened against its truths; but not so capable of occupying, with content, that miserable, lukewarm, intermediate, position of indifference between good and evil, which is the infernal gulf, that swallows up even more than the aristocracy, the purse-pride, mammon-worship, and selfishness of the middle classes.

"Now Dr. Gentili addressed himself directly to this earnest and deep feeling of the poor. He spoke to them no half truths, no mere formal utterances, no words of course, no scholastic doctrines learned by heart, and repeated by rote, no mere rhetoric, no fine sentences, no prepared discourses; but plain, homely, weighty truths poured out of a heart which studied them in the midst of austerities at the foot of the cross, and with a trenchant eloquence smote them into the hearts of those he addressed. Comfortable people were not always pleased with what he told them; and in London, the special abode of comfortable people, where, of all cities on the face of the earth, the Churches have the least accommodation for the poor, and the poor the least means of coming to hear the word of God, and to save their souls—in London, we say, the inhabitants of the shilling pews held him, we believe, in less esteem than the hungry and thirsting poor who hung upon his lips in other cities of this empire. Of this at least we are certain, that in London he felt his missions to be not exactly failures, but yet failures comparatively to his success in other places. This we have from his own lips. Of course, to our Catholic readers, we need not say that, in speaking of 'success,' we do not mean human applause, the numbers of his auditory, or the mere sensible gratification produced by his discourses. He spoke of something far

more important and practical; of the fruit in the confessional; of the evidence that came before him, as to repentance, and amendment of life; of the numbers who seemed, for the moment at least, to be snatched from their evil ways. Tried by this test, his visits to London gave him a certain disappointment, of which he made no secret at all to the present writer. His last efforts were in Ireland—in Dublin. Of these we have heard in general terms; but from what we have heard, there seems no doubt that in Ireland he was likely to have enjoyed a far greater influence than even in England. The private letters we have received from Ireland, show the high admiration of him that was entertained there, and the deep and bitter regrets that are felt at his untimely death.

“We have spoken of Dr. Gentili’s influence out of the pulpit; and on this subject we have only a word to add. In his conversation about public Catholic affairs, there was nothing so remarkable as his firm and invincible enmity to every kind of state interference with the Church, and to every encroachment on Canon Law, from whatever quarter it proceeded. In truth, on these questions, as well as on all others, he was no respecter of persons; and when there was necessity, he knew how to rebuke multitudes, as well as individual transgressors. But he had an habitual anxiety and dread of state interference with education, with charitable funds, or whatever else might be the matter in dispute. His whole weight in society, his entire influence on individual minds, was in this direction, to resist the beginnings of evil, to excite alarm as to the intentions of worldly men; and he was earnest in pointing out how the Reformation itself was merely the summing up of successive encroachments like those which we are now advised to welcome; the inevitable

result of state aggression, which, having succeeded in fact, had in each state acquired authority over the consciences of the faithful, so that at least there needed only one firm and vehement impulsion to break off England from the Church of God. In this respect the dear Dr. Gentili will be deeply felt; and we, in particular, shall feel, and do feel, more than we can express, the loss of one whose opinions we were found to share, and from whom we have always received the warmest sympathy and encouragement in the course which it has been our lot to take.

“May God have mercy on his soul! And may he, from his place in heaven, look down upon us struggling here below, and by his prayers and intercession, give help a hundredfold to the souls from whom he has been taken, and more especially to the community of which he was one of the most distinguished ornaments.”

CHAPTER XI.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

Entering now upon the second series, we commence with the letter addressed by the deceased's inseparable companion, Father Furlong, to the Provincial of the Institute of Charity.

CCXLIII.

“*Dublin, 26th September, 1848.*”

“MY DEARLY BELOVED FATHER IN CHRIST,

“Our venerated and holy brother slept calmly and sweetly in the arms of Jesus and Mary, this morn-

ing, about twenty minutes after seven. Requiescat in pace. He laid down his life in the service of his blessed Lord, standing on the battle plain with arms in his hand. Little did I anticipate that his labours were so soon to end. 'Fiat voluntas tua.....Deus meus et omnia!' Our Lord called him, the first of his brethren, over to England, and hath now been pleased to call him, the first of us, to the land of true existence. O what a felicity to be in the holy order of Religion! It will be consoling to hear from you or some of the brethren.

"Asking your paternal benediction,

I remain your most faithful Son in Christ,

"MOSES FURLONG."

The following is from the pen of the Reverend Emilius Belisy.

CCXLIV.

"*Melton, October, 1848.*

"VERY DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,

"It is not possible for me to express in words, how much I have been moved and grieved by this morning's unexpected news of the death of our very revered father, Aloysius Gentili. Up to this late hour of the day, at which I am writing, I have not been able to check my tears. No member of the Institute of Charity, with the exception perhaps of our dear father Furlong, lived so long with him, and under his guidance, as myself. Nor can I believe that any one could love and respect him more sincerely than I did. My heart seems ready to burst at the idea of his death. My hope is firm that he is now in heaven.

"He had a perspicacious mind, replete with taste for the fine arts. He was uncommonly prone to mortification, abstinence, fasting, and pious vigils: tenacious of religious poverty, most devout towards God—his Blessed Mother, and the Saints. He always spoke

of his superiors with great respect. He tenderly pitied and relieved the poor as far as possible, cherishing for them a sincere and religious sentiment of esteem. His defects (considering that he was a man) were rather excesses of zeal and fervour, than moral deficiencies. In fine, he ardently loved every object appertaining to Christian perfection. O my dear Gentili! what a loss for us! It is difficult to form a man so profoundly and so sublimely spiritual. When will the Institute produce his equal in England? How different from our ways and judgments are the ways of Providence! Our poor father Furlong must feel himself half dead with grief. Now that I am writing, I do, what I perceive I have been doing all day long: that is, I can scarcely keep my attention fixed upon any thing. I am scarcely able to think, but of the great misfortune that has befallen us. But God's most holy will be done, &c."

To the Father General Rosmini, the Rev. J. B. Pagani wrote to the following purport.

CCXLV.

"Ratcliffe College,

"28th September, 1848.

"VERY REVEREND AND MOST BELOVED FATHER GENERAL,

"Half an hour ago, I received from Father Furlong a letter announcing the death of our dear and saintly father, Aloysius Gentili. For the present I cannot write more, as tears fall from my eyes, my hand trembles, and my heart is most acutely pierced. At one and the same time I heard of his dangerous illness and death. Until yesterday, I had only heard of his slight indisposition, which the doctor thought would be succeeded by perfect health in a few days. This is an awful event for us, especially as the excellent deceased had acquired great experience, and notwith-

standing the opposition of some, was generally regarded as an object of admiration. But patience is necessary: we have always a Father in God, who cannot impart but what is good to His children, &c.”

In another letter, dated October 9th, he says:

“From all sides, I have received letters of condolence. But what affords me the greatest consolation is, that five English Bishops have written to me on this occasion, in terms of great esteem for the excellent departed. This day’s Tablet, also, contains matter sufficient to compile a small book to his memory. If his biography were written as soon as possible, I think it would certainly tend to the glory of God, owing to the edification which the Clergy and faithful would derive therefrom. Both here and in Ireland, there are thousands, who shew themselves desirous of seeing his published life.

“Considering attentively how our very dear deceased father gradually became so weak as to be torn from us after a few days of fever, I see clearly, that it must be attributed to the following causes; first, to immense and unceasing labour. Principally of late years, his toil was measureless; not only because of his continual preaching and hearing confessions, but also on account of his extensive correspondence. Secondly, to his very short repose, whether by day or night, for a great part of the latter was spent in writing and praying. For my part, I did not fail to exhort and conjure him to moderate his labours, and to take a little rest; but the zeal which devoured him, made him believe himself stronger than he really was, and hindered him from yielding to my requests. The same day that I received the doleful news of his death, I had prepared a letter, in which I strongly recommended him to come home as soon as possible—and to rest himself for some time.

Nay, I was thinking about writing to your paternity, to request that he might be recalled to Italy, at least, for a few months, in order to recover strength by the aid of his native air. But Father Furlong's fatal letter has thwarted my designs, and has forced me to commit the aforesaid letter to the flames. Thirdly, to scanty and weak nourishment. His diet was always meagre, of which he eat very sparingly. Seeing how necessary it was to keep up his strength, I dispensed him from the observance of the last *lenten* fast. But he did not avail himself of the dispensation, as he thought himself equal to the effort of fasting.

"However, in the midst of great discomfort resulting from this unexpected event, it is consoling to think that in the end, he died a victim to his zeal and fervent charity: '*Majorem charitatem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.*' His career, then, and its consummation, are worthy of a son of Charity. Humanly thinking, it would have been apparently a great blessing for us, if the Lord had left us Father Gentili for a few more years, until our affairs had become arranged and settled. But God knows what befits us: our duty is humbly and patiently to submit to the disposal of His Providence, which is ever most wise, and regulated by an infinite charity."

In answer to this communication, General Rosmini's Secretary, Father Toscani, wrote as follows.

CCXLVI.

"Rome, 6th October, 1848.

"DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,

"Our Rev. Father General has received your favours, dated the 3rd, 28th, and 29th of September, and the 2nd of October; of these, the first but one brought us the sudden and afflicting news of the death of our beloved and highly esteemed father,

Aloysius Gentili. All who knew him were struck with profound grief at the tidings. Cardinal Franzoni also, on hearing the case, manifested sorrowful surprise, with an act of resignation. It fell to my lot to make known the event to his family: with what effect I leave you to imagine. His brothers and cousins came afterwards to Father General to give vent to their feelings, and to seek for consolation. As regards the members of the Institute in Italy, they were greatly dejected, as if an irremediable calamity had befallen them. Oh heavens! A brother so amiable, by the sweetness of his manners and his virtues, and by his efforts for the good of souls and of holy Church. At a time when the Master of the evangelical vineyard seemed to have opened a new field for an abundant harvest of souls in unfortunate Ireland, how awful to hear that the scythe of death had suddenly mowed down his life, to learn his death before the tidings of his danger, or of the illness that was to conduct him to the tomb!

“Great and unexpected is such a loss! O Lord, accept the oblation of our sacrifice bathed with so many tears! Yes, my dear father, here we can only say: ‘Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit: sit nomen Domini benedictum! The loss of Father Gentili to our poor little society, is no small loss, for it would be great even for a society more strongly developed. But God knows what He is about—patience—‘sit nomen Domini benedictum.’ However, the dear brother whom we deplore, is not wholly lost to us; for it is credible that at his departure, he bequeathed his spirit to us, and certainly he has left us his example—precious examples of religious abnegation, penance, charity, and especially zeal in seeking for those who

had strayed into the by-paths of error and corruption, and bringing them back into the secure way of God's heavenly truth. Hence his surviving brethren may derive no small encouragement and support in the Lord's vineyard, on the field of religious combat, and on the great desert of sin, where so many erring sheep are dispersed far from the mystic fold, and in imminent danger of eternal perdition. Yes, the spirit and example of Father Gentili, may conduce more and more to prosper our Institute, and make it flourish in good works and holiness, to the greater advantage of holy Church—the more so if we add, what is not to be doubted, his favour from heaven; where a hope induces us to contemplate him before the throne of grace. Thus, like the Divine chief of our religion, he in his death, we trust, was the seed, which, when sown, was to bear much fruit; and the destruction of his corporeal frame was like opening an earthly prison door to the soul, which was enabled to fly unfettered to the place of its eternal reward—and to the company of the blessed, there to be our powerful protector.

“Wherefore, let us desist from weeping over his and our lot, if we have any true love for him or the Institute. Nay, let us rejoice at our own gain—while we congratulate with him at his exchange of austerity for joy—of labour for reward—of the combat for a crown—of mortal misery for immortality—of humiliation for glory—of exile in a foreign and heretical country, for the society of angels and saints in the supernal city of Christ's glorious kingdom.”

Here follow letters from English ecclesiastics, of which the first was written by the Rev. Father Newman, superior of the Oratory in England.

CCXLVII.

*"Maryvale, Perrybar,**"October 3, 1848.**"MY DEAR FATHER PAGANI,*

"I write to convey to you the great concern both of myself and of our community, at the afflicting event which has befallen you and yours.

"It is very mysterious that any one should be taken away in the midst of a career of such holy and important services as Father Gentili was rendering to Catholicism in this country. But may we not be confident, that in proportion to the greatness of the visible loss, is the real gain which will accrue both to religion and to your own Institute in particular, by the removal of so holy a person, who doubtless is able to do more for you and for the Church, where he now is by his prayers, than he could do by even the greatest exertions on earth?

*"I am, my dear Father Pagani,**"Very sincerely yours in Christ,**"JOHN H. NEWMAN,**"Cong. Orat. Soc."*

The following is from a Professor of Philosophy at Ushaw.

CCXLVIII.

*"St. Cuthbert's College,**"Feast of St. Michael.**"MY DEAR DR. PAGANI,*

"I write to you with many tears. But if my tears are numerous, what must yours be after the severe loss you have sustained? And yet in writing to you, I find that I am impelled by the desire to seek, rather than to afford consolation; for it would indeed be presumption in me to attempt to condole with or console you, who no doubt will reject every kind of consolation but that which One alone can give. O may

our blessed Jesus comfort you under this severe trial, may He now manifest Himself to you, and speak to your heart, and tell you, what I firmly believe to be the case, that your dear brother, that my dear friend is in heaven. Oh! he died exhausted by charity, hence he will now revel with delight in God, who is charity.

"Might I ask for one little short line from you, for I feel as if I had lost a Father, Brother, and Friend in Dr. Gentili. Would it were not true that he is dead. I shall say mass for him on to-morrow.

"Believe me, dear Dr. Pagani,

"Most gratefully yours in Christ,

"S. C."

The following was written by an Irish Parish Priest, to Father Furlong.

CCXLIX.

"*Ferne, October 3, 1848.*

"MY DEAR AND REVEREND FRIEND,

"I never received such a shock as I did, on reading 'the death of Dr. Gentili,' in the newspapers.

"Alas! what a loss to the Church of Ireland! to the Church of God! He was not five months in Ireland, yet I am persuaded that he accomplished more good during that short period, than ordinary priests would during a long life, or extraordinary ones in the course of many years.

"When I recommended his sainted soul to the prayers of my congregation on Sunday last, there was a thrilling sensation throughout the Church.

"I regret deeply that I had not the happiness of being one of the priests who attended his funeral, but am glad that I was well represented by my respected Curate, Mr. Mayler.

"All who knew Doctor Gentili, are morally certain that *He is a Saint*. So cheer up, my dear Sir, under

this bereavement, and believe me to be, with the highest respect,

“Your ever devoted,

“JAMES ROCHE.”

Here follows a letter of the Rev. Matteu Collier.

CCL.

“*Rathmines, Dublin,*

“*The Feast of S. Jerome.*

“MY VERY REV. AND DEAR DR. PAGANI,

“Little did I think when I last saw you, that my first letter to you after the happy days I spent in your saintly College, should be one of condolence. May the holy and adorable will of God be done. From the utmost recesses of my heart I deplore the loss, which we have sustained in the death of our dear and beloved friend, and venerable servant of God, Father Gentili. I knew him from the time I was a student in Rome, and I now ask him to obtain for me all the graces which he knows I stand in need of.

“Father Gentili entered the *Irish College* at the beginning of 1830. Whilst residing in the College, he attended, together with the students, the lectures of moral and dogmatic Theology, in the Roman College, under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. His life in the College was that of a most perfect Saint; he was most anxious to teach the Students the Italian, to enable us, as he used to say, to translate the many beautiful and useful works in that language for Ecclesiastics. His devotion to the Holy Mother of God was great indeed, and his ardent desire to inflame us all with the same; hence he formed a class, for the purpose of teaching Italian, to which he devoted several days in the week; as I had the happiness to be one of the number, I remember well the books which he selected, namely, ‘*Il devotó di Maria,*’ by Father

Segneri, and 'The Glories of Mary,' by St. Alphonsus de Liguori, and he made use of these books, more for the purpose of inculcating what was so dear to his heart, devotion to our Blessed Lady, than for any thing else. He was most anxious to introduce among the students the recital of the five psalms in honour of the Holy Name of Mary, and he always manifested a singular devotion towards our Lady of dolors.

"I remember a little fact from which we considered that God had given him the spirit of foretelling future events. It was when the Cardinals were entering the Conclave to elect the successor of Pius the VIIIth, he emphatically declared that Gregory the XVIth would be his successor, and it turned out most true. His great exactness in observing the rules of the College, his spirit of prayer, his abstinence at table, and his devout recollection, made such an impression on my mind, as has never been effaced.

"I always considered him a great Saint, and I humbly ask him to obtain for me, those graces and blessings which he was so anxious to procure for Priests. I feel my utter incapacity to express the many edifying facts of his humility and charity, whilst in the College.

"I remain most affectionately yours, &c. M. C."

From the President of the Foreign Missionary College of All Hallows.

CCLI.

"Dublin, May 27, 1850.

"VERY REV. FATHER PAGANI,

"In the year 1847, good Dr. Gentili had the charity to give the Spiritual exercises, for eight days, to the members of our College, professors, and students. We had reason to be very grateful for the alacrity with which he undertook to render us this service, and for

the zeal with which he performed it. During the time he spent in our house, his habit of life was a source of singular edification. His mind seemed to be incessantly occupied about his Master's business, and to his body he gave no repose save what was absolutely essential, and we have now reason to fear that during his missions in Ireland, his toil was greater than nature could endure. Apparently, he added austerity to labour. But I do not wish to speak of these things, of which God alone can estimate the value. What was evident to us was his ability, his great usefulness, and his very fervent zeal. He seemed endowed with great natural talents, and he combined in a high degree acute reasoning power with strong and rich eloquence. What an apostolic preacher he must have been when he spoke his own sweet native tongue! By his death, our institution lost a sincere and devoted friend, and we had to lament in common with all the Catholic inhabitants of this city, a great spiritual benefactor.

"Accept, very Rev. Father, the assurance of the very great respect and esteem, with which I have the honour to remain,

"Your devoted in Christ,

"D. MORIARTY,

"President, &c. &c."

The following was sent to the beforementioned Provincial, by the President of one of the first Catholic Colleges in England.

CCLII. "Although I had not the pleasure of being so intimately acquainted with Father Gentili as many others, I can safely say that, as far as I knew him, he exhibited most edifying and convincing proofs of fervent piety, and an unbounded zeal for the glory of God. He seemed in all that he did to forget himself, and to

look only to the interests of his Master. His eloquence was such as the Spirit of God alone could inspire. Hence there was a force in his words which spoke directly to the hearts of those who heard him, as if the Holy Ghost were exhorting by his mouth. His power of fixing the attention even of the most wandering minds was quite extraordinary. The striking and profound views which he took of every religious subject, the liveliness of his imagination, and the inexhaustible power of illustration which he possessed, contributed not a little to aid the effect of his discourses. At the same time he possessed in an eminent degree, those external qualities which are essential to an effective speaker. Yet the music of his voice, and the singular grace of his impassioned delivery, though powerful in adding to the effect of his words, were almost forgotten in the unction which accompanied everything he said; so that I have known some deeply affected simply by hearing him repeat a sentence of Holy Scripture.

“He evinced also a remarkable mortification of the senses. In evidence of this, I have heard from an eye witness, that on one occasion, when dining, some food was placed upon the table by mistake, of a quality extremely nauseous and unfit to eat. Some of this was served to Father Gentili, who began to eat it without exhibiting the least sign of repugnance; and when the mistake was discovered, the holy missionary appeared reluctant to allow it to be removed.

“His zeal made him no respecter of persons, so that when the glory of God was concerned, he spoke boldly and without disguise; and regardless of what men might think of him, he urged upon all, both high and low, the duties of their respective states.

“May God, who has been pleased to remove him

from amongst us, at a time when we so much needed the example of his zeal and charity, deign to animate the souls of those labourers whom he has left behind him in the vineyard."

The following letter is from the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Birmingham.

CCLIII.

"DEAR FATHER PAGANI,

"It is with great delight that I learn your intention of publishing the life of our valued friend, the good and saintly Dr. Gentili. Whatever tends to perpetuate his memory, will not fail to influence beneficially the fervour of the Clergy, and the piety of the faithful. To his zeal and untiring labours we are mainly indebted for the origination amongst us of the 'Spiritual Exercises' which, both in Retreats and protracted Missions, he so successfully developed during the short, but brilliant career that Providence permitted him to run. I deem it an honour and a happiness to have known him, and to have enjoyed the benefit of his lights, of his counsels and example. He possessed, in my humble judgment, an admirable tact in the regulation of consciences, a quick discernment for the solution of difficulties, a prompt and practical casuistry to decide correctly in perplexing doubts, and a cheerful, generous piety that warmly sustained and animated his penitents. His ready eloquence was of the highest order, and his mortified habit and disinterested sentiment gave it an energy and persuasion that drove forcibly to the heart.

"I believe, dear Father Pagani, that you have his mantle amongst you. May it long adorn your zealous

Institute, and train up disciples adequate to the religious wants of our clouded country.

"I remain, Dear Father Pagani,

" Your faithful friend,

" And brother in Jesus Christ,

" HENRY WEEDALE.

" *St. Mary's Presbytery, Handsworth,*

" *Octave-day of St. John the Baptist, 1850.*"

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS OF SEVERAL BISHOPS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Finally, to these honourable documents may be added the testimonials of the English Prelates addressed to Dr. Pagani, with the exception of the following from the Bishop of Beverley, which was addressed to Father Furlong.

CCLIV.

" *York, 29th Sept., 1848.*

" MY DEAR FATHER FURLONG,

" I very sincerely condole with you, and mingle in your deepest grief in mourning the loss of poor dear Dr. Gentili, so truly dear to me, and so valuable to the Church. Religion has reason to weep over his loss, and lament the loss of one of her most talented and zealous champions and defenders. The sad tidings reached me yesterday, just before I began Mass, which I offered for the repose of his soul. Poor dear man, he spent a good deal of time with me last winter, and as we sat together at the fire each evening,

I admired, more and more, his talents, and his strong love for the Church, whose independence and liberty was almost the continual subject of our conversations. I cannot tell how much I valued poor dear Dr. Gentili, both as a friend and adviser in matters of difficulty and of general importance.

"Anyhow, I should be glad to have any trifling thing belonging to my dear lamented friend, as a memento of him. I would prefer anything which I had been accustomed to see with him, or about him.

"I beg to be most kindly and affectionately remembered to the good family with whom you are staying.

"Believe me to be, as always,

"Truly yours,

† "JOHN BRIGGS."

The following is from the present Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, &c.

CCLV.

"*St. Cuthbert's College,*

"*Durham, Oct. 3, 1848.*

"MY DEAR DR. PAGANI,

"Allow me to add my condolence to that of the many who, no doubt, have addressed you on occasion of the heavy and afflicting loss which you have sustained. In fact, it is not you, nor your Institute, that has been bereaved, but the whole body of English Catholics, who have so long known the zeal, eloquence, and exemplary life of your late confrère. The news of Dr. Gentili's death took me quite by surprise, on taking up the *Tablet* at Darlington, on my way hither; for I had not even heard of his illness. However, he died a martyr to his zeal for the salvation of souls; and God, no doubt, has amply rewarded his labours. Still he will have the suffrages of all who

knew him, and of none more fervently than mine, in the Holy Mysteries.

“ Believe me ever,

“ Yours very sincerely,

+ “ N. WISEMAN.”

From the present Bishop of Minevia, &c.

CCLVL

“ *Bilton Grange, Oct. 6, 1848.*

“ MY DEAR F. PAGANI,

“ Only late on Saturday evening last, I heard from Dr. Ullathorne of the great loss your holy Institute, and Catholicity, in the United Kingdom, has to sustain by the departure from us of that zealous and edifying servant of God, and missionary, Father A. Gentili. Ever since I have been anxious to sympathize with you thereon; but until this moment I had not the least leisure for doing so. Accept now the expression of my heartfelt condolence, though our sublime faith suggests to us most powerful motives for submission to the Divine Will, which, to you, I need not develope. Thus viewed, indeed, the departure of our venerated Brother in Christ seems to claim our congratulation with him at the happy close of his labours and exile, and the assurance that the charity which glowed within him, and consumed him on earth, secures to us in heaven a powerful intercessor.

“ Understanding that you desire to collect the most striking traits of his holy life, I offer, as my contribution, the memory of one most striking act of heroic humility, known to Father Furlong as well perhaps as to me. Bad health, the consequence of too severe missionary labours, confined Dr. Gentili to his bed for several days after the opening of the mission at Newport, about two years since. At length he was able to get up, and his zeal would allow him no farther

repose. Twice, therefore, he addressed a crowded audience of 1,500 persons, in the large Church at Newport; but owing to his weak health, he could scarcely be heard far down the Church, and he was unable to make those efforts which had riveted so many ears and hearts. Hence a deputation of Catholics and Protestants waited upon me, to say that Father Furlong had won the approval, nay, admiration of all that had heard him—that no other preacher could be so acceptable—and especially that they were so dissatisfied with Dr. Gentili, that they would not attend at any more of his sermons. The mission being within a few days of its conclusion, I thought it best not to risk the consequences of opposing this general expression of feeling, but knew not how to break so delicate a subject to the zealous Dr. Gentili. At first I sought to induce him to spare his convalescence; but every suggestion to such effect was rejected by his ardent zeal urging him to make up now for his past silence, and trusting in God that each day his strength would improve. At length I used expressions, the meaning of which flashed for the first time on his mind, and he replied, that ‘perhaps the congregation did not wish to hear him preach any more.’ On my preparing to make this harsh truth as little grating as possible, he anticipated my explanation by saying, ‘Oh! I thank God that he humbles me. Never has any mortification been so trying to me; but I require to be humbled, and thanks be to God, that he sends me this humiliation. I will not try to preach any more; only I will aid the mission in every other possible way.’

In fact, giving up the idea from that moment, he zealously applied himself to aid the mission in other ways, such as superintending the exposition of the

Blessed Sacrament, directing the processions, and making other similar arrangements. Any one acquainted with Father Gentili's solicitude in missionary preaching, which he regarded as the essence, nay, the very life and soul of his ministry, will alone be able to form an estimate of the acute sacrifice made on this occasion."

The fourth letter is from the present Bishop of Liverpool to the same Father Pagani.

CCLVII.

"Bishop Eton, May 20, 1850.

"DEAR REV. SIR,

"I have great pleasure in adding my testimony to that of others in praise of the zeal and untiring energy of the late Rev. Father Gentili. I have had some opportunities of witnessing the talents and eloquence with which he enforced the great truths of salvation; and I have been gratified and edified in the highest degree with the plentiful harvest of souls that he gained to God and the Church by his incessant exertions in the vineyard of the Lord.

"I remain,

"Dear Rev. Sir,

"Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ "G. BROWN."

The last letter is from the Right Rev. William Bernard Ullathorne, Bishop of Birmingham.

"Bishop's House,

"Birmingham, July 7th, 1850.

"MY DEAR DR. PAGANI,

"I not only comply with your request, but consider it a privilege to send for your use in the forthcoming life of Dr. Gentili, a few traits of the character of that elevated and fervid, yet gentle soul, as in

the last years of his life I intimately knew him. Should you find anything in my remembrances of use, you will make that use of them. Should they have been anticipated, you will, without any scruple, lay them aside.

“In the year 1844, when a missionary at Coventry, I invited Dr. Gentili to preach a sermon to my congregation. This began our closer acquaintance. We spoke much and confidentially together on the state of religion in England. One idea then ruled his mind, that England wanted an Apostle. He observed that almost all great restorations of faith and charity which had taken place in the different provinces of the Church, had their origin in some individual. Raised up by God, filled with His Spirit, and endowed with apostolic force, such men came forth unexpectedly, shook their fellow-men out of their day-dreams, forced their way on through contradictions, criticisms, and the amazement and anger with which the world received them, and gave a new life both to clergy and people. Such an apostle, he felt, was wanting to the Catholics of England before we could think of doing much service to those beyond the pale. Earnestly speaking in this way, he more than once said to me, ‘Pray to God, that He may raise up an apostle.’

“I met him the same year at Grace Dieu, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. We both preached that day on occasion of erecting and blessing the Calvary raised on the granite rocks which lift their heads above an expanded tract of country, near the residence of his esteemed friend, Mr. A. Lisle Phillipps. This was one of his happiest days. Standing in the bright daylight, with the heavens over his head, he pointed to the form of our crucified Lord, and spoke of the serpent lifted up in the desert, the type of sin and

of the passion of our Lord, and of its healing and life-giving fruits. His audience was formed of four congregations, mostly the children of his own labours, intermixed with a number of strangers. They sang the hymns he himself had taught them, and were piously recollected. To see this public memorial of faith displayed thus openly in the very centre of England, and for the first time in modern ages, in the midst of the scenes of his own labours, seemed, whilst it closed a passed order of things, to open a new era in his missionary life. That hallowed spot has ever since been an object of devout attraction. At all times, but especially on Sundays and festivals, groups are seen approaching it. A school for the poor stands at the foot of the rocks. It was whilst labouring in the formation of these missions, that he acquired that thorough knowledge of the English people, of their ways of thinking and of feeling, which was the last preparation he required for the work to which Providence soon after called him. I was told by more than one person of his incessant labours, often against hope. He would go forth, accompanied by some person as a guide to the inhabitants, and a witness of his life, and trudge the country from house to house, and return late home, often having had but little food, and that irregularly, and would lay him down in a state of complete exhaustion of body and mind. This toil he continued for years, winning souls one by one with anxious perseverance, often long uncertain of the final result of his efforts. For a short time he was induced to lighten his labours by riding on a pony, but he gave it up as inconsistent with his sense of apostolic poverty. During these labours, he not only acquired an intimate knowledge of the manners and customs, but of the superstitions of the people, of

which he made great use in his after missions. His habitual converse with the people gave him also that facile use, so singular in a foreigner, of the turns and idioms of our speech, which was one of the elements in the natural order of his wonderful success as a preacher.

“Not long after the event I have recorded, I had the happiness of making a spiritual retreat under his guidance, at Loughborough. This gave me the best opportunity of observing with what spirit he guided souls. It was a leading principle with him, that the intellect should be enlightened by clear and great views of Divine things as far as capacity allowed this to be done. These elevated views and nearer contemplations of Divine things by the eye of faith, he considered as great helps for correcting and invigorating the will. Not that he did not regard prayer and the sacraments as the great means of grace, but he was in the habit of remarking that the more full and clear the light of truth was in the understanding, the more easily the will rose out of sensual things and abandoned vain imaginations. That being more intimately united to God in His truth, we are less in danger of falling from His charity: and that if we should unhappily prove unfaithful, the light once planted in the mind, though obscured by sin, would still remain in a degree to rebuke, confound, and humble the heart of the sinner, and so dispose him to conversion by making him the more unhappy in his sin. Hence, with St. Thomas as his guide, he loved to enlarge upon the person of our Lord, and upon His Incarnation, as the end of all the exterior works of God; upon His intimate union with a soul in His grace; upon the means of that union, especially by contemplation and the Holy Eucharist; and upon the

Church as the great instrument of His glory and the end and clue to the Providence of God over this entire world; on the nature of truth, of justice, of charity, and humility; on the power of holy spirits on the one side, and of demons on the other, with regard to our souls. From these and similar subjects, drawn out and shewn in their connexion, and their intimate relations with our souls, he drew the most striking rules and motives for animating and guiding the will of his penitent to the service and glory of God, and to the service of His Church as the great instrument of His will.

In the following year, our dear departed friend gave that mission in Coventry which he was so fond of recalling to memory. The reason for giving this mission requires some explanation. Every third year, within the Octave of the festival of Corpus Christi, a procession of a disgraceful character takes place in that ancient city, countenanced by the city authorities. It is a singular illustration of the force of habit. Let any other town be invited to make a like exhibition to its inhabitants, and to the strangers within its gates, and we may imagine the indignation with which the proposal would be rejected. The central figure and main object of this procession is a female, so garbed, as if unclothed. And besides the common offence against public decency, what adds to the pain of every good Catholic is, that it is substituted for those sacred processions of our Lord's Body, for which Coventry in old days was famous. It was also famous for its mystery plays, drawn from the Gospel history, and celebrated in the open streets during the octave of the same festival, under the general direction of the Friars Minors. Sharpe, in his *Coventry Mysteries*, has collected very curious records, as well of these sacred processions

as of the Mysteries. The Sovereign assisted at them, Queen Mary being the last who did so. The histories of Coventry inform us that the Godiva procession does not reach further back than the reign of Charles II. How such a legend as it incorporates, came to be associated with the wife of Earl Leofric, I never could ascertain. History only speaks of her great piety, and of her munificence to Churches.

“Knowing well how much this pageant tended to corrupt the morals of youth, not on the day of its exhibition, so much as in the light and corrupting conversation it occasioned during several weeks of anticipation, I deemed it my duty as the missionary of the place to counteract the evil to the extent of my power. The protestant bishop of Worcester thought it his duty to address a letter to the city authorities that year, with a similar view. We resolved then to begin a mission on the festival of Corpus Christi, and to continue it through the Octave. I had preached on the subject for two Sundays previous, and Dr. Gentili, with Mr. Furlong, threw their best energies into the work. During the first three days their efforts seemed in vain; but few persons appeared. Most were preparing their houses for the Gala day, and finishing up work for a week of unbroken leisure. With Sunday, at last came the congregation, trim and new clad—I scarcely knew them again. For the inhabitants invite their friends from far and near to witness the disgrace of their city on a certain day. In this present year, upwards of twenty-five thousand visitors filled the old city on the day of the procession. No sooner had our pious missionary that congregation before him which he loved much for the piety he had repeatedly witnessed in them, than, grieved at the attachment he saw they had still for their old custom, and consuming

inwardly with zeal, his pent up soul burst out in such a torrent of remonstrance and affectionate reproof, that sobs and tears from many parts of the church gave him assurance that he was responded to. For the congregation is truly pious, and had only been misled by inveterate custom. Day after day, and three times a day, he continued his fervent preaching. I believe that very few Catholics witnessed the procession that year. After all the anxieties occasioned by a very wet day, it started late under the encouragement of a faint gleam of sun, to be drenched for the rest of its course. The pious missionary had promised the children of the congregation that if they remained with him, he would give them more amusement than they could find in the streets. And well did he keep his promise, as they kept theirs to him. For he interwove his instruction with such a chain of stories and dramatic pictures, told, and in a manner represented to them in action, in a style so winning, so amusing, so ludicrous, and so awful by turns, as the subject shifted or its feelings changed, that older people stood astonished, and the children were out of themselves; sometimes subdued into awestruck silence, at other times they broke out into a rapture of mirth. It was one of those hours that are never forgotten through a long life. After this day, strangers began to multiply within the church. He reverted to the past procession, he reminded them how he had prayed and asked others to pray for rain. He passed from the subject to one of his famous discourses on the Mother of our Lord, and he concluded by saying, 'You have had the procession of your Lady, we will now have the procession of our Lady. The one shall expiate the other.' On that evening, the image of the Blessed Virgin was carried in a solemn and beautiful procession, and on the next evening, and on the next

after that; until such vast numbers flocked to the church, that the people not merely filled both church and churchyard, but even the adjoining street. So that as the procession proceeded round the church, Dr. Gentili in his surplice had to conduct another kind of procession, for under his direction the people flowed on in a continuous stream from the South through the North door, that these multitudes might have a glimpse at least of those ancient rites which had thus returned to triumph over their profane and modern substitute.

"In the month of October, 1847, Dr. Gentili and Mr. Furlong undertook to give a mission for fourteen days at St. Joseph's, Bristol, where I was then residing as Vicar Apostolic. They came straight from holding a mission at Manchester, where during its last days they had sat up to two or three o'clock in the morning in the confessional, and they took no intervening rest before commencing their new task. This mission was remarkably successful. It commenced a new order of things in Bistol which has not since been arrested. Their exertions demonstrated that the religious wants in that city were much greater than any one had calculated upon.

During the course of this mission, Dr. Gentili remarked that there was an experiment in conducting missions which still remained to be tried. The close of these exercises, when they had been continued the usual period of fourteen days, was, for many persons, only their beginning. In very large towns and cities which had few priests and churches, and many negligent Catholics, it was only by the sensation caused through the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and the processions, that a considerable number of persons were drawn to the Church, or even made acquainted with the circumstance of a mission being in

progress. For these poor souls every thing had to be done during the last day or two, and in a hurried manner, and some of them only made their appearance at the conclusion of all. The zealous missionary thought therefore that to meet this difficulty, some missions should be prolonged for a month. Bristol, he thought, was a good place for a trial. We accordingly agreed to try this plan at St. Mary's in that city, in the course of the ensuing year. This was accordingly done in the February and March of 1848, and though the labour was excessive, the fruits were proportionate. Even to the last day abundant work was provided for the confessionals.

“There is no residence for the clergy attached or near to St. Mary's, and so this zealous missionary, unwilling to lose time in going to and fro, as he alleged, though a love for mortification no doubt was his leading motive, insisted on residing in a room of the sacristy. There he slept, and there for a month he continued, leaving the Church only for dinner, and for a little fresh air once in the day. It was in vain that we remonstrated with him. He said he was there ready for his early and his late work, and for seeing whoever might seek him at any time; he insisted that it did him no injury, and that it was more convenient than any other arrangement that could be suggested. At this time, though as energetic as ever, he was visibly much worn, and I felt anxious about him, and urged that after the close of these missions he ought to have a good interval of rest. I saw him and conversed with him alone almost daily during this long mission. For I thought it a duty to divert his mind a little from his labours; and this was to me a very grateful occupation, for besides our friendship, his conversation was always striking and instruc-

tire. It was at the commencement of the turmoils of '48, signs of danger to religion and society were already appearing, and did not escape him. He was anxious, nay his mind was heavy with solicitude. He stole a few moments to look at the papers, and I never before knew him taking this deep interest in public affairs. He was also anxious about the state of the Church in England, and had much to say on this subject that was worth hearing. That was a peculiar moment in our history, the circumstances of which have since in great measure passed away. Amongst other things, we had some converts, as well as young branches of the old Catholic stock, and a section of the newly-arrived clergy from abroad, who gave to their undisciplined zeal a new channel. They took to wondering why the external development of religion in England was not at that moment exactly like that of Italy or Belgium, and why England was not being very fast converted. Ignorant of the circumstances out of which we were emerging, and especially ignorant of the nature of the difficulties with which we were contending with all our strength, it became the fashion to talk these fancies aloud even in the Eternal city. And loudly were both prelates and clergy blamed as men lost to the true sense of their position. With these gentlemen, the old clergy, the old orders, and the old bishops, everything old in Catholic England was wrong, nay dead; only things new or freshly imported were living and aright. The Holy See, with its usual wisdom and perspicacity, soon discerned the true state of things. It was a grain or two of truth that had got confounded in a bushel of injustice. But at that moment these matters were fermenting and causing some trouble. I have introduced this somewhat delicate subject because I think

it a duty to my departed friend, to record his views and feelings on the subject, more especially as there was a disposition in some persons to fancy that he was a party to this zealous cry of inexperience. He talked to me much on the subject in the last months of his life, and I believe that to another, and a venerable bishop, now living, he imparted his sentiments with equal freedom. He said that when he first came to England, judging everything by his own feelings and desires, he had thought and spoken much as these persons had done. That his residence in a College had not changed his ideas; that his experience in his own incipient missions had not changed them. But when he became practically conversant with the missions throughout England, the more he with his own eyes saw the real nature of the work, both of bishops and clergy, the elements they had to deal with, and the temporal difficulties with which they had so severely to contend, the more conviction grew upon him that their work in most instances was great and untiring, but that none except those engaged in it could appreciate its character. He felt and keenly felt the desire, as if a sacred duty of justice, to take some opportunity of reaching Rome for the sake of representing to the Holy See what he knew of the real nature, and the actual difficulties of the English mission. For this purpose, he told me in confidence, that he had obtained from his General Superior a permission to avail himself of any opportunity that offered of accompanying some bishop who might be going to Rome. This desire had for its object to do what justice he could to the Catholics of England, and I think you will agree with me that, though he lived not to accomplish it, the memory of his intention should be preserved. He was far from being blind to the defects in our organi-

zation, or in its workings, on these things he had much to say, and how would his soul have rejoiced to have witnessed the dawn of the new era, coming brightly on through the surrounding tempest.

“No man can do anything unusual or striking for the salvation of souls, without having swarms of the tribe of small talkers gathered round his name. This phenomenon is natural, and well known, and does no harm to a great soul. But upon common souls it often acts like a mildew. The holy servant of God H. Boudon, has said, that ‘they who trouble themselves with what the world may say, will never do much good,’ a truth this servant of God, our earnest missionary, well understood. He was habituated to the murmurings of these swarms. In his forenoon discourses he was accustomed to enter into minute details of each Christian duty in succession; he took the commandments one by one, and brought them home to the different classes of men whom he had to address. He analysed the passions of the heart, and shewed their several dangers: and then treated of the means of grace and the way of perfection. His grand appeals he reserved for his evening discourses. ‘There was a time,’ he said to me, ‘when I used to make fine discourses, but I afterwards found that they went over people’s heads, so now I go right to their consciences and their hearts.’ And thus, whilst the wounds of his charity made many penitent and faithful, some persons had only their pride made uneasy; others were startled at hearing so much of Theology, it was new and strange to them; some were shocked at the anatomy which he was compelled to make of human vices and follies. Detached sentences were repeated and exaggerated; droll hits at pride, vanity, and grosser wickedness were in many mouths; perilous amusements were touched

upon in a way that shocked those who understand not what is perilous, and reflected not on the extent of practical knowledge in the preacher. Thus infirm and lukewarm and idle souls got troubled, and especially such as feared his power of converting sinners. Comments were made and reflections passed upon his teaching. It got misrepresented, and it became a habit with sundry people to question his prudence, possibly by way of asserting their own. Meanwhile the holy missionary went on toiling out his life and reaping his great harvest of souls. But as a precaution against these cavils, lest they should injure the effect of his remarkable instructions on the Christian duties, he gave them latterly, with an approved Manual of Theology in his hand, which he cited and referred to in proof to his hearers that he was but following the common doctrines of the Church. I questioned him in our conversations on every point I had heard alleged, and with patient good nature he explained his teaching. And although on one point, that of entrance into the religious state, he took a view on the generous side of the question comprehensive beyond the ordinary doctrine on vocations, on all other points I found his teaching coincide with that of the usual authorities.

“One of the finest features in his missionary life was seen but by few persons. It was when he met the clergy who aided in the missions at their meals and short periods of relaxation. A layman distinguished for shrewd thought and mother wit, once remarked to me, that he had not understood the scope of his powers and zeal, until he thus witnessed his converse with his brother clergy. The lead of conversation was a good deal left to him, and he took it as if a part of his missionary field, and turned it to edification and profit. It was easy and natural to him to rise from

common objects into those more elevated regions of divinity or philosophy to which his mind was habituated. At other times the spirit of the missionary, or the cure of souls, or some case of conscience, or the Catholic customs of his own country, was the topic; or he took the politics of the day and put them in a Catholic point of view. But whatever the subject, he knew how to lighten it with amusing remarks and apposite anecdotes.

“From Bristol, Dr. Gentili went to Bath, and there gave one of his most successful and his last mission in this country. As a proof of his obedient spirit, and of the absence of self-opinion from his character, I may observe that, at a suggestion offered, he changed the whole plan and tone which he had originally intended to have taken in giving this mission. He meekly remarked, that it was for the bishops to direct him, and for him to obey, that he would be thus secure of following the Spirit of God. Nor was this the only instance in which his spirit of deference had edified me. This was the last I saw of him. He much needed rest, and took a few days to himself before going to Ireland. He had a presentiment of his approaching death. He was at Kenilworth making a short visit to Mrs. Amherst and her family. On the morning of his departure for Dublin, he was looking with some interest for a letter which he expected, to free him from his engagements there. It came not, and he said that he should not return to England, that he should die in Ireland. He begged Mrs. Amherst and her daughters to pray for him as soon as they heard of his death. And then turning to the clergyman who was present, he said, ‘and you, Father Mitchell, you must say Mass for me.’ Three years have passed, and his place is still vacant. Let us pray,

my dear friend, that God may raise up for us another Apostle, like to him.

“I remain,

“Dear Dr. Pagani,

“Your devoted Servant in Christ,

“† W. B. ULLATHORNE.”



CHAPTER XIII.

THE DIRGE—FUNERAL ORATION—AND BURIAL.

CCLVIII. To describe the last solemn rites performed over Father Gentili's lifeless body, is all that now remains for us to conclude this historical narrative. According to ocular witnesses, it is not easy for those who were not present to form an idea of the extraordinary pomp, and impressive magnificence, displayed on the occasion. In this fact to me there appears a luminous proof of what philosophy and religion agree in asserting, that virtue alone, though divested of all that the world so ardently desires, obtains, as if by divine enchantment, a loving, grateful, and heartfelt homage, even in these times, which seem so indifferent, and even coldly averse, to the humble sanctity of the cross. And verily, what did Gentili possess that could excite so marvellously the metropolis of Ireland thus to honour him after death? He could not lay claim to the right of citizenship—to high birth—wealth—noble lineage, or illustrious rank: he was but a poor modest stranger—a simple priest, and humble religious, with no other attractions than that

afforded by virtue and divine charity. This was enough to unite an immense multitude of all classes in awarding to his corpse funeral honours almost more triumphant than an ambitious policy seeks in vain, sometimes, to exact from the people, at least legally, as a tribute to the grandees of this world.

As soon as Father Gentili's illness became known in Dublin, an interest was excited among all ranks of Catholics, but particularly among the poor. Crowds of people gathered in the streets leading to the Church of the mission. On the Monday evening preceding Father Gentili's demise, the throng increased so much that the public authorities deemed it necessary to station a police force there to keep order. But no sooner was it reported that he was dead, than the crowd augmented to such a degree, that the thoroughfares near St. John's became almost blocked up, and a detachment of police was sent to the church door to prevent accidents. After remaining in the Augustinian house till Wednesday the 27th, to content the wishes of the people, it was deemed proper to transfer the corpse to St. Audeon's, a church of vast dimensions, and capable of accommodating several thousands. To effect this design, about a dozen strong men uplifted the bier supporting the corpse, and with difficulty conveyed it over the heads of the multitude from the small church to the larger one. Here the body of the deceased missionary, vested in clerical robes, and covered with flowers, was publicly visible. On the uncovered countenance was remarked a certain celestial placidity and grace. But that I may not seem to be indulging in fanciful details, it will, perhaps, be better to state the circumstances of the funeral as related by a writer in the "Freeman's Journal," copying the article verbatim.

CCLIV. "Another victim has fallen in addition to those who have, in the sacred discharge of their duties, been already snatched away by fever. It is our peculiarly painful duty to announce that the Rev. Dr. Gentili, missionary of the 'Institute of Charity,' died on Tuesday morning, at the Augustinian Chapel-house, John street, in this city, after ten days' illness. The disease which has deprived this city of so gifted and eloquent a clergyman, was fever caught in the discharge of his laborious duties at the confessional. There are few Catholics in this city who have not heard and admired the preaching of this distinguished divine, who is now, alas, no more; and it is but an act of justice to his memory, to say that his loss is deeply and sincerely deplored by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. He came to this country about two years ago, and since that period he has held the first rank as a preacher, respected by all for singlemindedness, and devotion to the holy cause of religion, and the salvation of souls. He laboured in the confessional—he consoled the afflicted—he bound up the bleeding heart, and reproved the sinner; he preached, he instructed, without intermission, and rejected corporal repose. The thousands who were enraptured by his eloquence, can never forget the zeal and energy with which he threw his sanguine spirit into the execution of his mission. His demise has caused sorrow—deep and intense sorrow—throughout the city. But he has gone to receive the reward due to a life devoted to the sacred ministries of religion, and the consoling of the afflicted. He discharged the sacred duties which he had vowed to fulfil, and which he so nobly performed, to the last moment of his existence.

The last solemn ceremonies of the church were celebrated on yesterday over the remains of this much-

lamented clergyman. No intimation was necessary to thousands of Catholic christians of the city of Dublin, who already knew that the tomb was about to close on all that was earthly of the sainted being whose mission in this world was but to raise the hearts of men to the hopes of a better. The tidings had spread far and near through the city, that the soul of this pure and holy man had departed, and since the morning of his death, crowds of faithful poor, reconciled to their lot, and confirmed in Christian faith and virtue by his teachings, kept mournful watch by day and by night in the Church where his remains lay in sight of the altar, before which, for them, he so often bowed in prayer, and at last, with saddened memories, yet grateful hearts, pressed, for the last time, around his bier, and prayed even as he taught them to pray for the eternal rest of their spiritual guide and benefactor. In the neighbourhood of High-street and the adjoining localities, crowds of people were collected from the earliest hour in the morning. The gates of the Church of St. Audeon, where the remains were deposited, were besieged by anxious applicants for admission. The shops and houses of business of every kind in the neighbourhood were closed; the ordinary appearances of busy occupation were suspended, and every thing around bespoke the most profound regret and deepest veneration for the departed. As the day wore on, the crowds became more dense, and the thoroughfare in the immediate neighbourhood of the church became almost impassable, so much so, that in order to keep order and preserve life, the police in strong force were required to be present. Such was the intense enthusiasm of the people crushing towards the church, so as to be present, if possible, and join in the last tribute of respect to the memory of him who loved, like the

Divine Model he imitated, to dwell amidst the humble, and fling the light of christian faith and holy hope on the darkling homes and cold hearths of the friendless poor. During the sojourn of Dr. Gentili amongst us in life, the heroic acts of christian love and devoted zeal, and charity, which marked his mission, were comparatively but little known—they were not blazoned forth under the semblance of public utility, nor shown up to the world in the ostentatious guise of public charity. No, he did his Master's work in secret. The left hand knew not of the outpouring from the right. The thoughtless world knew not of the glorious change he was effecting in the minds and hearts of the many; men paused and wondered at the mysterious increase of religious feeling amongst the poor, their patience in suffering—their patience under bitter privation, and their fortitude under temptation and persecution: but the world little dreamed by what agency those noble virtues were developed in a suffering and starving people. They little knew what the spirit of religion could effect, infused into the hearts of the poor by the teachings, and illustrated for their example *by the lives* of Gentili and such as he; and only on an occasion like this, when death arrests from the poor their benefactor and their guide, that grief and gratitude unseals the lips of poverty, and it then speaks aloud of wants relieved, and spirits raised up and comforted by him, who has departed from amidst the homes of the poor to dwell with angels.

The doors of the church were scarcely well opened, when the nave and *side aisles* were crowded to the utmost. The seats reserved in front of the sanctuary soon began to fill with the leading Catholic citizens of our city and their families. The galleries also became thronged to excess, and at the time arranged for the

commencement of the ceremonies, the entire church was literally crowded to the utmost. In the aisles and nave—in every available nook of the vast building—the people were packed almost to suffocation, whilst a congregation, equal in number, occupied the yard outside, not being able to effect an entrance; and though outside all were on their knees during the high mass, offering their prayers for the eternal repose of the venerated deceased.

The ceremonies commenced at eleven o'clock. The prelate presiding, the Right Rev. Dr. Devereux, Bishop of Gautstown, (Cape of Good Hope,) and the Bishop Celebrant, the Right Rev. Dr. O'Connor, Bishop of Saldes, entered the sanctuary, preceded by a numerous body of clergy. The prelates and clergy proceeded to the choir, partitioned off in the midst of the nave, and commenced the office for the dead by the introductory psalm *the venite*. The church at this moment presented a most imposing appearance. After the mass, the Rev. Dr. Moriarty ascended the pulpit, and taking his text from the epistle of the Apostle St. James, he proceeded in a strain of the most thrilling eloquence to dwell on the triumphs of Christian faith and charity, over the sorrows, the trials and temptations of this world. He quoted the inspired Apostle in describing religion pure and holy before God—"To visit the fatherless and the widow in their tribulation, and to be pure and unspotted before the world." Such he described the life and acts of the revered deceased to have been—such, he said, was the bright christian example he had set by his spotless life. The Very Rev. Preacher then entered into a brief narration of the life and sacerdotal career of the deceased, from his residence in the Irish College in Rome, to his last mission to his beloved and adopted country. He detailed the wondrous

results of his mission of love, the converts he had made to the faith, and the multitudes he had won back to the paths of gospel virtue. They were not, he said, to be numbered by thousands, but he trusted that all present would rejoice on the last day in seeing them numbered among God's elect, and signed with the blood of the Lamb who died for all. The preacher, in a strain of sublime oratory, spoke of the mission of Gentili as but the beginning of a glorious epoch, the sowing of the good seed, which would yet bear fruit in the glory and prosperity of the country, and concluded a splendid oration by a sublime and fervent aspiration for the eternal welfare of the just man and great priest whose mortal remains they were about to commit to the dust.

"The sermon produced the deepest emotion in the congregation. During portions of it, loud sobs were heard from parts of the Church, and many of the congregation, doubtless penitents of the deceased, seemed plunged in grief and tears. The requiem having concluded by the chaunting of the 'Libera,' the ceremonies concluded, and preparations for the funeral commenced. Much difficulty was experienced in removing the coffin, such was the crush of the people to touch it, and lay their beads and prayer books upon it before removal. The crowd outside was really dreadful, yet, through the extraordinary activity of the police, under the command of Inspector Durham, no accident occurred. The police force acted all through the funeral with the greatest efficiency. Inspector Little, with some men under his command, succeeded in keeping perfect order. Superintendent Walsh was at the cemetery, and by his exertions prevented the accidents which otherwise must have occurred from such a vast crowd of people. The streets, from High street, even

to the cemetery, were literally crowded so as to be all but impassable.

“The Society of St. Vincent of Paul, was represented nobly at the funeral. It was under the auspices of this society that Dr. Gentili first visited Ireland, a circumstance for which he was often heard to thank the society most fervently, as opening to him a fertile field for the dissemination of gospel truth and the exercise of charity. The society, counting some hundred members, left the carriages, assumed their cloaks, and formed on the road at some distance from the entrance of the cemetery; they were joined by the several religious confraternities in their habits and orders; the prelates in full pontificals, preceded by the clergy, then formed in procession around the lower bier, to which the coffin was removed, and thus surrounded by acolytes, bearing numbers of lighted tapers, the procession resumed its march to the place of interment. The scene at this point was most impressive and interesting. As the procession entered the cemetery gates, the crowd which had accumulated around in dense masses, respectfully fell back; and all was hushed, save the wailing tone of the bell, and the low cries and sobs of people in the crowd. Then the clergy began the chaunt of the ‘*Libera*,’ which was continued till the procession reached the vault, which is in the round space of ground, within which, the great O’Connell lies entombed. The crowds here collected were enormous, and all knelt as the prelates and clergy sung the ‘*De profundis*.’ The body being placed within the vault, the usual ceremonial of aspersion was gone through, and the benediction being given, the tomb closed on the dust of the sainted Gentili, and the vast crowd slowly dispersed. Truly in his death alone was it shown how deeply and devot-

edly this faithful servant of God was beloved by all. Truly may it be said of him:

“A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of the just man’s death is better than the day of his birth.”

CCLX. In consideration of Father Gentili’s singular merits, and mindful that England had been the privileged field of his apostolic labours, the Provincial of the Institute of Charity, wished his mortal remains to be deposited in some house belonging to the Institute. For this purpose, on the 29th of September, he commissioned one of his English companions to proceed to Dublin, in order to claim the body, and bring it with him to Rattcliffe College, in England. But all his endeavours proved fruitless. The religious enthusiasm of the people towards the defunct missionary, or the “saint,” as he is there commonly called, was so great, that to attempt taking it away by stealth, or force, might have caused a popular tumult. It was, therefore, necessary to give up the enterprise, with the hope of succeeding better at some future period, as the corpse is enclosed within three coffins, and preserved in a distinguished part of the cemetery. In the meantime, that good and faithful people continued to frequent the tomb with the same veneration with which they would approach the relics of a saint.

CCLXI. In concluding this biography of my dear friend, and holy companion, Father Aloysius Gentili, I may observe how different the designs of God are to the thoughts of men. When Gentili first resolved upon exchanging his position in Rome for the Calvary of Domodossola, and to prefer, to other religious orders, the infant Institute of Charity, which had not yet been approved of by the Church; and which, known to and esteemed by few, was

still, by some, derided and calumniated, while it had but few connections, or means; reduced to a handful of persons, and almost buried in a corner of the earth, who would not have said, according to all appearances, that he was making a wretched choice?—that he was going to bury the precious gifts he had received from heaven?—that he was barring the way to his ever being able to undertake those great things for which his talents were adapted? This, doubtless, would be the language of those who reason according to the dictates of human prudence. But Gentili well knew the excellence of that advice given us by Christ, viz., to choose the last place at the mystic banquet (Luke xiv.) that is in Holy Church. He deeply believed in what is affirmed by the Doctor of the Gentiles, that the Lord is often pleased to select the most ignoble, the most contemptible, and the weakest instruments, to confound and annihilate the wisdom, the power, and the glory of the world. (1 Cor. i.) He doubted not that to him who simply seeketh the kingdom of God, and His justice, all other good things would be added. (Matt. vi.) In fine, he acknowledged the truth of that saying of Jesus Christ, that the grain of wheat is never so near budding and fructifying as when it is put into the earth to die. (John xii.) For all these reasons he judged that he had made an excellent choice in selecting a mode of life devoid of external splendour, and which was more conformable to the humiliations and sufferings of the cross. Rejoicing in this way to abandon himself with an entire trust in Divine Providence, and to force it, so to speak, to demonstrate, by wonders, how true it is that hope therein is never confounded. And so it happened, after being for a few years like a candle placed under a bushel on Mount Calvary, in Italy, the Lord was

suddenly pleased to place him conspicuously on the candlestick in another region. He shone like a bright and shining light over England. As it were its new apostle, by his charity, prayer, and holy example—by his eloquence, zeal, and indefatigable labours, in a short time he converted, to penitence and faith, innumerable souls; thus meriting that glorious reward promised by the Holy Ghost. *Qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos fulgebunt quasi stellæ in perpetuas æternitates.* (Dan. xii.)

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